

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD FOR IRELAND,

FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1917,

BEING

THE FORTY-FIFTH REPORT UNDER "THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD
(IRELAND) ACT, 1872," 35 & 36 V.I.O., c. 69.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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DUBLIN CASTLE,

28th September, 1917.

SIR,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, forwarding, for submission to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, the Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland, for the year ended 31st March, 1917.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. O'FARRELL.

The Secretary,
Local Government Board,
Dublin.

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FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD FOR IRELAND.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY IVOR CHURCHILL, LORD
WIMBORNE.

Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD,
DUBLIN, 19th September, 1917.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, the Local Government Board for Ireland, submit to Your Excellency this, our Forty-fifth Annual Report, under the Statute 35 and 36 Vic., chap. 69, entitled "The Local Government Board (Ireland) Act, 1872," which deals with our proceedings, generally, during the year ended the 31st of March, 1917.

For convenience of reference, the Report is classified under the following heads :—

- I. Local Government (Ireland) Acts, Motor Car Acts, Old Age Pension Acts, Unemployed Workmen Act, War Relief, Food Production, etc.;
- II. Poor Relief, Medical Charities;
- III. Public Health Acts, Tuberculosis Acts, etc.;
- IV. Provisional Orders under the Public Health Acts, the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and the Local Government Acts, etc.;
- V. Labourers Acts;
- VI. Borrowing by Local Authorities: Loans sanctioned for Housing Schemes, Public Health purposes, etc.;
- VII. Payments from the Local Taxation Account in aid of Local rates;
- VIII. Audit;
- IX. Examination of Parliamentary Bills;
- X. Deputations received;
- XI. Departmental arrangements.

The usual appendices giving details of expenditure, as well as important orders, circulars and reports, have not been printed, but pursuant to the provisions of Section 23 (2) and (3) of the Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1916, summaries of the expenditure, etc., are given in the body of the Report. The various tabular statements have been prepared in the office, and the information contained therein is available at any time if required.

I.—LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

The temporary postponement of local elections, to which we referred in our last Report, was prolonged by the Parliament and Local Elections Act, 1916, which received the Royal Assent on the 28th August in that year. The postponement authorised by the Act extended to local elections to be held in Ireland before the 20th May, 1917, and the elections of borough councillors and urban district councillors which, but for the Act, would have been held in January, 1917, did not take place, the term of office of existing councillors being extended accordingly. In the exercise of the powers given to us by the Act, we applied its provisions to the election of town commissioners by our Order of the 26th September, 1916. A similar Order was made in the case of the election of the Belfast City and District Water Commissioners.

The effect of these successive postponements has been that no election of borough councillors, urban district councillors or town commissioners has been held since the year 1914-15.

Reference may here be made to the elections of county councillors, rural district councillors and guardians in urban districts, which occur triennially, and which were last held in the months of May and June, 1914. The preparations for the holding of these elections occupy a considerable time, and, as the postponement authorised by the 1916 Act expressly stopped short of the first day in 1917 on which these elections might be held, the local authorities were left in a state of some uncertainty as to whether or not the preparations for the 1917 elections should be proceeded with. We were repeatedly pressed for instructions on this point, and though we were unable to give an authoritative ruling, we expressed the belief that it was very unlikely that the elections would be held. Our belief proved to be justified, as the postponement was authorised immediately after the end of the financial year by the Parliament and Local Elections Act, 1917, which received the Royal Assent on the 26th April last.

In our last Report we referred to the suspension of the preparation of the parliamentary and local government register of electors under the Parliament and Registration Act of 1916. This Act, while requiring the suspension of the preparation of the register until Parliament otherwise directs, excepted from its operation the taking of such steps as might be directed by the Local Government Board as respects information of deaths or any other statistical information. In pursuance of the powers given by this proviso, we issued an Order on the 31st May, 1916, the effect of which is that the Superintendent Registrars of Births and Deaths shall continue to supply the information hitherto required of them in respect of persons of full age who may have died in the different registration units.

The Act included a clause providing for the payment out of the funds of the local authority concerned of compensation to local officers for temporary loss of emoluments owing to the suspension of registration work. The payment of such compensation was made subject to our directions, and before deciding on the claims received during the year we communicated with the local authorities by whom compensation was payable. The great preponderance of opinion expressed by the local bodies was in favour of awarding these local officers the full average of their emoluments received from this source. We felt, however, that we would not be warranted in going so far as was recommended by the local bodies, and we required that appropriate deductions should be made in each case. All the claims, with the exception of those in one county, were disposed of by the end of the year.

Poor Rate Collection.

The improvement mentioned in our previous Reports in the collection of the poor rate throughout the entire country has been fully maintained, despite the continuance of the War. The Sinn Fein Rebellion, which occurred in the early part of the year, had, fortunately, little or no adverse effect on the collections, as it took place in the interval between the closing of the previous year's collection and the issue of the new warrants.

By the 31st March, the full amount of the poor rate had been lodged by the collectors in 711 of the 736 collection districts in the counties. In twenty-one cases, where there was delay in closing, a satisfactory explanation was forthcoming, and in only four districts were the reasons put forward by the collectors inadequate to account for their failure to close in time.

The number of counties in which the collections were closed by the 28th February shows an improvement on last year's record, as will be seen from the following table :—

	... ...	29 out of 29 collection districts.
Antrim	... ...
Armagh	... ...	6 , 12 ,
Down	... ...	30 , 30 ,
Galway	... ...	26 , 36 ,
Limerick	... ...	16 , 25 ,
Londonderry	... ...	11 , 11 ,
Mayo	... ...	10 , 43 ,
Tipperary (S.R.)	... ...	7 , 12 ,
Tyrone	... ...	2 , 24 ,
Wicklow	... ...	3 , 19 ,

A notable example of improvement in the collection of poor rate is afforded by County Mayo, where, some years ago, the finances were in a rather disorganised condition. In the year under review the full amount of the first moiety of the year's collection

was lodged on the 30th September, together with £8,011 out of the second moiety of £29,141. The collections for the whole year were punctually closed in all districts, and in ten out of the forty-three districts in the county the collectors had finished their work by the 28th February. In two districts the entire year's collection was closed so early as the 11th October and 8th November.

It is interesting to note that counties which are reputed to be the poorest in the country are included amongst those in which the rates are most punctually collected.

The collection of the poor rate in the urban districts was equally satisfactory and calls for no special comment. The number of urban districts in which the collections were closed by the 28th February was the same as last year. A list of such urban districts is appended :—

Armagh.	Kells.
Athy.	Killarney.
Ballyclare.	Killiney and Ballybrack.
Ballymena.	Larne.
Birr.	Letterkenny.
Bray.	Newcastle.
Buncrana.	Omagh.
Castlebar.	Portadown.
Donaghadee.	Portstewart.
Dungannon.	Warrenpoint.
Keady.	

ROADS.

The continued restrictions on borrowing and the curtailment of Road Board grants have obliged local authorities to confine road improvement operations to work of the most urgent necessity. Loans for this purpose to be raised from outside sources were sanctioned in only two cases—viz.: Longford County Council (£2,500) and Wexford County Council (£510). We also approved of proposals made by the Clare and Limerick County Councils for advancing funds from their own general credit balances instead of borrowing from outside sources, for carrying out steam-rolling work in certain rural districts.

The following table shows the grants to Irish road authorities allocated by the Road Board during the year :—

County Council.	Amount of Grant.
Antrim ...	£500
Carlow ...	34
Clare ...	7,094
Down ...	96
Dublin ...	605
Kildare ...	470
Sligo ...	284
Total ...	£9,083

In addition to being hampered by the absence of monetary assistance in the shape of loans or grants, the road authorities have had to face the general demand for increased wages for labour throughout the country and a general increase in the cost of road material. In certain cases the limits of wages contemplated by direct labour schemes had to be relaxed, and extensions of limits of road expenditure in forty-two rural districts were authorised by Orders made by us under Section 27 (2) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898. Sixteen of these Orders represented permanent increases, while four of the remaining Orders were in the nature of adjustments rendered necessary by the alterations of rural district boundaries consequent upon the recent formation of new towns. The higher rates of wages granted to workmen and the increased cost of road materials were the main factors responsible for the increases, and in a few rural districts the existing limits had to be temporarily raised to permit of the repair of the damage caused by the severe rainstorms of last summer.

The system of direct labour still maintains its popularity, and Orders were made for the renewal or extension of existing schemes in the Counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Galway, Kilkenny, King's, Leitrim and Westmeath. This system was adopted for the first time in Counties Fermanagh, Longford and Sligo under the authority of Orders made by us during the year.

In consequence of the demand for labour for tillage operations in the food crisis which has arisen, we issued a circular on the 7th February last, pointing out that assistance might be given by the road authorities by releasing for agricultural work as many as possible of the labourers employed on road maintenance and other road schemes. We suggested that, as in many counties the bulk of the road material had already been spread, labour might during the next ensuing months be confined to surface work on roads bearing heavy traffic, and that steam-rolling operations might be held over for a time. This appeal was extensively responded to, and it is believed that road labourers will also be set free for farm work during the coming harvest.

Two important road inquiries were completed during the year, one in County Tyrone and the other in County Cavan. In both cases it was necessary to deal with the general administration of county works, and as the result of the inquiries we made suggestions which, it is hoped, will prove useful to the County Councils in arranging for certain necessary improvements.

The Order in County Mayo referred to in our last Report declaring main roads was made on the 20th September last, so

as to operate from the 1st April, 1917. In the case of County Galway, after an inquiry, we made a similar Order declaring about 585 miles of the roads throughout the different rural districts to be main roads, and this Order has also been in operation since the beginning of the present financial year.

It became necessary for us to exercise our powers under Section 82 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, by declaring the Belmullet Rural District Council in default with regard to the proper upkeep of some roads in their district. The Rural District Council had rejected proposals which the County Surveyor had put forward for the maintenance of certain main roads, and apparently the Rural District Council took this action in consequence of their dissatisfaction with the new declaration of main roads in the county. On the issue of the default Order, however, the Rural District Council passed the necessary proposals, and the matter then terminated.

During the year we confirmed bye-laws framed by the Antrim and King's County Councils and the Waterford Corporation under the Public Roads (Ireland) Act, 1911, for granting annual licences to locomotives used within their areas other than for agricultural purposes, and for charging a fee in respect of each licence.

CONTRACTS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

The question of holding contractors to the terms of their contracts in view of War conditions is one which has caused a considerable amount of correspondence with local authorities during the year. In dealing with cases of this nature in the earlier stages of the War, we had indicated that, when a contractor whose contract was entered into before the outbreak of hostilities carried out his obligations, the local authority might, at the expiration of the contract period, be justified in paying him a sum over and above the contract price equivalent to his proved actual loss. This principle was adopted as an emergency arrangement, and it was anticipated that legislative sanction would be obtained for its application. This anticipation was, however, not realised, and accordingly all such cases, whether the contract was taken before the War or after its outbreak, have now to be treated as subject to the ordinary law.

Experience gained since the outbreak of the War confirms the view that any general relaxation of ordinary contract obligations is an expedient to be adopted with the utmost caution, and that allegations of hardship caused by contracts require to be thoroughly tested. Cases came before us in which there were grounds for believing that contractors were, without legiti-

mate cause, endeavouring to induce local authorities to waive conditions in their contracts and to pay enhanced prices. Local authorities, being in the position of trustees, and being bound by strict statutory provisions, are required to be doubly careful in incurring expenditure; and, when we were approached, we indicated to them that they would be liable to account strictly for any expenditure incurred over and above contract prices. At the same time, we recognised that in some cases excessive hardship might result if a contractor having an old contract were held rigidly to his obligations. In such cases we expressed the view that where a contract entered into since the outbreak of War was for a period of two or more years, it might be reasonable to assume that a contractor could not at the time of taking the contract have foreseen that the War would extend for so long a period, and that an application to cancel such a contract at any time after the expiration of the first year during which it was running might possibly be justified; that where the contractor alleged that, owing to War conditions, he was unable to complete it at the stipulated price, a safe course for the local authority to adopt might be to ascertain from their contractor the minimum price at which he would be willing to supply the articles or perform the work for the balance of the period of the contract, and the local authority should then issue advertisements inviting tenders from outside persons for the completion of the contract. If they obtained tenders at a price less than that specified by the existing contractor, the local authority could then, with his consent, put an end to the contract and enter into a new one with the accepted tenderer; if, on the other hand, all the tenders received were at a price higher than that specified by the existing contractor, a fresh contract might then be entered into with the contractor at the new price, as agreed to by the local authority.

The introduction of the competitive element was designed to minimise the danger resulting to the local authority in their trustee capacity from the breaking of the contract, and to prevent illegitimate attempts to secure higher prices.

INVESTMENTS IN WAR LOAN.

When the 1929-47 War Loan was announced by the Government, we received a number of inquiries from local authorities as to their power to raise money for investment in the Loan. We issued circulars on the 31st January and 9th February, 1917, explaining that the powers conferred by the Public Authorities and Bodies (Loans) Act, 1916, might be availed of for this purpose by borrowing from the Treasurer of the local authority. Consequent upon applications which we received, we sanctioned borrowing under that act in the following cases, it being imposed

as an invariable condition that the amount borrowed should first be invested in the War Loan, and the Stock not to be realised or otherwise applied without our previous consent:—

County Councils.			Amount of Borrowing Sanctioned.
Antrim	...	...	£50,000
Armagh	...	...	10,000
Down	...	...	30,000
Fermanagh	...	...	15,000
Galway	...	...	5,000
Londonderry	25,000
Westmeath	20,000

County Borough Council.

Belfast	590,000
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Urban District Councils.

Ballyclare	1,000
Ballymena	10,000
Ballymoney	4,500
Banbridge	...	...	...	5,000
Bangor	...	...	...	30,000
Carlow	...	...	...	5,000
Coleraine	...	...	...	9,500
Dalkey	...	...	...	4,750
Drogheda	...	...	...	9,500
Enniscorthy	...	...	...	6,000
Galway	...	...	...	5,000
Holywood	...	...	...	10,000
Killiney and Ballybrack	...	...	...	5,000
Kingstown	...	...	...	10,000
Larne	...	...	...	3,500
Limavady	...	...	...	1,900
Lurgan	...	...	...	42,845
Naas	...	...	...	1,150
Navan	...	...	...	5,000
Newry	...	...	...	25,000
Newtownards	...	...	...	9,500
Pembroke	...	...	...	50,000
Portadown	...	...	...	3,000
Rathmines and Rathgar	...	...	...	10,000
Tanderagee	...	...	...	250
Tipperary	...	...	...	23,000
Warrenpoint	...	...	...	2,000
Wexford	...	...	...	5,000

	Amount of Borrowing Sanctioned.
Other Public Bodies.	
Belfast City and District Water Commissioners	£87,400
Ballymena Rural District Council	10,000
North Dublin Rural District Council	5,000
Lurgan Board of Guardians	2,000
Total amount sanctioned	<u>£1,146,795</u>

A number of authorities invested further sums in the War Loan from the balances to credit of their current accounts, or from other sums which were available to them, without recourse to borrowing.

LOCAL OFFICIALS ON MILITARY SERVICE.

The action of local authorities, who have been making payments during the War to those of their employees who joined His Majesty's forces, was legalised by the Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1916, which received the Royal Assent during the year. We are glad to be able to say that the local authorities have treated those of their officers who joined the colours in a generous spirit.

DISPOSAL OF CORPORATE PROPERTY.

The operations under this head were not quite so extensive as in previous years, no doubt owing to the requirements which are imposed for re-building where reversionary leases are sought for.

Extension of Time for Payment of Accounts.—Section 51 (7), Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, and Section 4, Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1902.

Owing to abnormal conditions prevailing throughout the year the number of applications for extension of the time for the payment of overdue accounts was somewhat over the usual average. The occurrence of the insurrection in Dublin and the absence of accounting officers of different firms on War service were mainly responsible for this increase.

An undue number of these applications came from spending committees of the local bodies, but we hope, by stringent exercise of our powers, to secure that these committees will in future carry out the statutory requirements more strictly.

COUNTY SURVEYORS AND ASSISTANT COUNTY SURVEYORS.

A vacancy for a County Surveyor arose in County Galway, but had not been filled before the end of the year.

No examination of candidates desiring appointment as Assistant County Surveyors was held.

ALTERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS.

Proceedings were instituted during the year for the adoption of the Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act, 1854, in the town of Howth and adjoining district in County Dublin. The Order approving the boundaries and directing a meeting to be held to consider the matter was made by us on the 17th January, 1917. On receiving a report that the meeting was in favour of the adoption of the Act, we issued an Order on the 22nd March last declaring the Act to be in force in the new town as from the 1st October, 1917. Our action was questioned before the Courts by the North Dublin Rural District Council, but the Court of King's Bench refused the application of the Rural District Council. An appeal has since been taken by the Council, which has failed, the Court of Appeal upholding the Order made by us. The decision of the Court in this case is one of great importance to growing communities desiring to be placed under municipal government.

MEETINGS OF PUBLIC BODIES.

During the year we made Orders at the request of the public bodies concerned in pursuance of Section 14 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1902, altering the day or hour at which the statutory monthly meetings of the Council may be held in the Urban Districts of Castlebar, Navan and Strabane.

We also issued Orders under the Urban (Transferred Business Procedure) Order, 1906, authorising the Bundoran and Portstewart Urban District Councils to hold half-yearly instead of quarterly meetings for the transaction of business relating to public works in their districts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) ACT, 1898.—SECTION 66.

During the year we issued the usual certificates under this Section of the sums to be paid to us by the Corporation of Dublin and the Dublin County Council to meet payments in respect of the pensions of the staff of the former Collector-General of Rates in Dublin, the total sums payable by the City and County being the same as in last year.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (IRELAND) ACTS,
1914-1916.

To the list of districts in which these Acts are in force the Urban Districts of Bray, Carlow, Kilkenny, Killarney and New Ross have to be added, the appropriate Orders having been made by us during the year for these towns. The question of putting the Acts in force in Waterford County Borough is under the consideration of the Corporation.

MOTOR CARS.

Under the Expiring Laws Continuance Act of 1916, the Motor Car Act, 1903, was continued in force until the 31st December, 1917.

The number of complaints received during the year of excessive speed of motor cars showed a marked decrease as compared with previous years, the decrease being obviously accounted for by the great curtailment of motor traffic caused by the restrictions on the supply of petrol.

It is satisfactory to note that the yield of the Motor Car Licence Duties in Ireland for the year ended March, 1916, as notified to us by the Postmaster-General, was £3,909 5s. 3d. in excess of the previous year, amounting to £40,673 10s. 9d., as against £36,764 5s. 6d. The usual percentage accruing to County and County Borough Councils was duly paid to their credit during the year.

In pursuance of Section 13 of the Finance Act, 1916, we made regulations, similar to those made for England and Scotland, providing for a distinctive sign to be affixed to motor cars exempted from motor car licence duty as being hackney carriages. The intention of the provision in the Act and of the regulations is to assist the more effectual enforcement of the payment of the motor car licence duty.

We have had before us an application from the Corporation of Dublin for the issue of a regulation providing that heavy motor-cars shall be fitted with splash-guards to obviate the damage and nuisance caused by mud-splashes from heavy motor-car traffic in the city. The question of the most effective apparatus for the purpose is under the consideration of a Departmental Committee in England, and we have deferred dealing with the application until the recommendations of this Committee are available.

THE DUBLIN RECONSTRUCTION (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) ACT, 1916.

A special Act of Parliament (6 & 7 Geo. 5, Ch. 66) was passed during the Session of 1916, to deal with problems arising in Dublin out of "the reconstruction of areas, streets, houses or buildings destroyed or damaged in the course of the recent disturbances"—i.e., the rising which took place in April, 1916.

The damaged area of the city included a large part of Sackville Street, which had always enjoyed, since its laying-out by the Wide Streets Commissioners, a prominent place amongst modern thoroughfares of the spacious type. It was strongly felt both by the public and the Dublin Corporation that no buildings should be allowed to rise from the ashes of that street which would be unworthy of its past reputation. At the same time, projects were discussed for making the widespread demolition of buildings an occasion for carrying out street improvements

—projects for which a precedent might be found in the “town-planning” scheme submitted by Sir Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of London. Such considerations as these gave rise to a demand for special legislation, and it was to meet that demand that the earlier sections of the new Act were drawn.

The first section provides a special simplified procedure for the putting in force, by the Dublin Corporation, of the compulsory provisions of the Lands Clauses Acts, in taking land for street improvements. It also introduces a novel method of street widening, called “substitution,” which is to be carried out by shifting back entire property interests from their old frontage to a position more remote from the existing street.

The aim of section 2 of the Act was to secure that the architectural and artistic merits of the new streets should not be prejudiced by any haphazard erection of unsightly or inappropriate structures. The City Architect is given power to require reasonable alterations to be made in the plans as respects the design, line of frontage, and materials of a proposed building. This is a special power directed towards preserving “the amenity of the street,” and it is additional to any powers already existing under Corporation byelaws. Disputes as to the reasonableness of a requirement of the City Architect are to be settled by arbitration, with the Lord Lieutenant as a final umpire. It was recognised that increased cost might be incurred in rebuilding or restoring damaged property in such manner as would comply with the requirements as to “amenity,” and sections 3 and 4 were framed for the financial assistance of the owners and occupiers in such cases. The difference between the certified total cost of rebuilding and the amount of Government compensation may be advanced by the Corporation on the security of the ownership of the site. In some cases this security cannot be made available for an advance owing either to defective title, to the insufficiency of the borrower’s interest or its value, or to the absence of the concurrence of necessary parties. Accordingly, the Land Judge is given power to make orders charging the ownership of the site and any legal interest therein with the repayment of the money advanced. A comparison of the third and fourth sections of the Act discloses a dual control with regard to the investigation of legal titles, which has been obviated by arranging, with the approval of the Treasury, that the Land Judge may conduct such investigations on behalf of the Local Government Board. In order to supply the Corporation with funds for making building advances, they may borrow from the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, and the Commissioners are empowered to lend the money at the current minimum rate for loans out of the Local Loans Fund for periods of repayment not exceeding eighty years. The fifth section will enable the Corporation to acquire premises rendered derelict by a failure to make any progress with restoration or rebuilding after two years from the passing of the Act (22nd December, 1916). The main purposes of the Act are comprised within

sections 1 to 5, 10 and 11, and the Schedule, whilst the procedure under section 1 has been regulated by the Board's Order of the 21st March, 1917. Rules have also been made by the Land Judge under section 4.

The Act contains several supplemental provisions which are of importance to property owners. The rateable valuation of injured premises must not be increased for a period of twelve years (section 6); such premises are exempted from rates till the expiration of a year after rebuilding (section 7); section 8 gives special facilities for the renewal of licences for licensed premises, where business has had to be suspended during rebuilding; and section 9 extends, for the benefit of tenants of rebuilt or restored premises, the protection given by the Town Tenants Act against rent-raising as the result of improvements effected.

The Dublin Reconstruction (Emergency Provisions) Act introduces several new departures in local government legislation. For the "substitution" of lands there is no direct precedent, although in at least one English local Act power has been given to a local body to make compensation either in works, land or money.

The provisions for the preservation of "amenity" are also new. They may, however, be compared with existing local enactments, which give to the local authority power—

- (a) to approve of the elevation of buildings erected on lands fronting new streets;
- or (b) in the case of the laying out of new streets by owners of building lands, to require particulars showing the general scheme for the development of the estate.

The procedure for the acquisition of land under the Schedule to the Act is new to Ireland, but is similar to that set up in England by the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act of 1909.

OLD AGE PENSIONS ACTS, 1908 AND 1911.

The following tables give particulars relating to the appeals dealt with by the Board in pursuance of these Acts during the year :—

1. (1) No. of appeals received from Pensions Officers	...	4384
during year ended 31st March, 1917	...	
(2) No. of appeals received from other persons	...	520
	Total	4904
2. (1) No. of appeals on claims decided during year	...	3361
ended 31st March, 1917	...	
(2) No. of appeals on questions decided	...	972
	Total No. of appeals decided during year	4333

3. (1) No. of claims allowed at 5/- a week, 378; No. of claims allowed at less than 5/- a week, 313	691
(2) No. of claims rejected on Age, 1299; Means, 1228; Residence, 29; Nationality, —; Failure to work, —; Imprisonment, —; Relief, 9 ...	2565
(3) Appeals dismissed, late, etc., on claims	105
Total ...	3361
4. (1) Appeals on questions :—	
Pensions unaltered	253
Pensions raised	20
Pensions reduced	132
Pensions revoked :— Age, 6; Means, 289; Residence, —; Nationality, —; Failure to work, —; Imprisonment, 4; Convicted for offence under the Inebriates Act, 1898, —; Relief, 248; Disqualification under Order of Court, 1 ...	548
(2) Appeals dismissed late, etc., on questions	19
Total ...	972

The total No. of Appeals received from the passing of the Act of 1908 till the 31st March, 1917, was 85119

And the total No. of Cases decided in the same period was 84042

In September, the Government presented to Parliament a statement of the Concessions they had made in order to protect existing pensioners from having their pensions cancelled or reduced owing to temporary increases in their means due to the receipt of allowances from soldiers or sailors, or of grants from employers or others to meet the increased cost of living. A copy of the Government's Memorandum was circulated by us on the 29th September, 1916.

Later, the Government announced that an Additional Allowance, varying from sixpence to two shillings and sixpence a week, might be granted to old age pensioners who were in receipt of a pension at the rate of five shillings a week, provided their total means, including the old age pension, were within certain defined limits, and provided they were suffering from hardship, due to the increased cost of living caused by the War. We issued a copy of the Scheme with our Circular Letter of the 6th October, 1916.

A Supplementary Circular was issued on the 22nd November, stating the Government's views respecting the cases of pensioners in possession of capital of an appreciable amount.

In connection with this Scheme, 11,535 appeals were received by us up to the 31st March, and much additional work was thus thrown upon the Department. Arrangements were made to deal with the appeals as expeditiously as possible, and practically no delay was caused to applicants who were entitled to receive an increase. Of the appeals received up to the 31st March, 11,216 were dealt with by that date, leaving only 319 undecided.

UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN ACT, 1905.

The work of Distress Committees under this Act was suspended during the year in the absence of grants from the Government towards their expenses. In the County Borough of Dublin, however, the Distress Committee continued to work in conjunction with the Local Representative Committee in administering the National Relief Fund.

WAR RELIEF.

The events connected with the outbreak which occurred in Dublin at Easter, 1916, only require to be adverted to in this section of our report in so far as they bear upon the problem of the relief of distress amongst the unemployed. The total dislocation of the commercial and industrial life of the City caused by the disturbances rendered immediate steps necessary for meeting the wants of the population and for maintaining the supply of food-stuffs and the equitable allocation of them throughout the City and suburbs. This duty was entrusted at the time by the Government to a special Committee, of which the Vice-President of this Board was chairman. Every facility was afforded to the Committee by the Military Authorities, while the Dublin Wholesale Produce Association, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin County Borough, and the Rathmines Local Representative Committee in Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District, rendered invaluable co-operation during a very arduous time. With the approval of the National Relief Fund Committee, a sum of £5,297 16s. 6d. was made available from that Fund towards the cost of the assistance so afforded.

After two weeks, when the critical period of the disturbances had passed, and greater freedom of movement was accorded to the civilian population, we arranged for the emergency relief operations to be carried on by the Boards of Guardians of the North and South Dublin Unions. The transfer, which took place as from the 8th May, 1916, was made known by public posters and Press notices, and the relief so available was afforded according to scale based on the numbers in the family and given by way of orders for food to be presented by the recipients to any retail merchant in the provision trade. These arrangements were kept in force until the evening of the 11th May, when relief was curtailed, being subsequently confined to cases in which it could be shown on full investigation that there was

urgent necessity, and that the applicant was actually out of work owing to the outbreak. It was considered desirable to follow this course owing to the fact that day by day the situation had become easier, and that the instalment of relief that had been given would carry many applicants over their difficulties until they obtained, two days later, their wages for the week. With the approval of the Government, we undertook to recoup the Boards of Guardians the cost of the emergency relief afforded by them up to the 16th May inclusive, and the expenditure thus involved amounted to £2,350 11s. 11d.

Apart from the business that had been carried on in premises destroyed during the outbreak, the commercial life of the City had largely been resumed by the middle of May; but in order to prevent any hardship arising from a complete withdrawal of the special relief arrangements, the Corporation of Dublin and the Dublin County Council, having first being satisfied by the Boards of Guardians of the North and South Dublin Unions as to the existence of exceptional distress, made application to us under Section 13 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, for authority to enable the Boards of Guardians to administer relief out of the Workhouse without involving disabilities to the recipients. Our Orders made in pursuance of that Section were issued on the 16th May, 1916. On the 5th June following, on the application of the Dublin County Council, we conferred by order similar powers on the Rathdown Board of Guardians as regards the District Electoral Divisions of the Union situate in Dublin County. In none of the districts was it deemed necessary to extend operations beyond the prescribed period of two months covered by our Orders. The relief thus made available was distributed on the following scale:—

Class of persons to be relieved.	Weekly cost of relief not exceeding	
	s.	d.
(1) Husband and Wife	...	8 0
(2) For One Child	...	1 6
(3) For Two Children	...	2 6
(4) For Three Children	...	3 0
(5) For each additional child beyond three	0	6
(6) Widow or Widower	...	5 0
(7) Each adult dependant under 70 years of age	...	3 0

Meantime the machinery of the Local Representative Committee for the relief of distress in Dublin had been heavily taxed by numerous applications from persons, mostly young girls, who had lost their employment through the destruction of business houses in the City, and from the dependants of persons who had been accidentally killed or seriously wounded during the disturbances. To cope with the unprecedented circumstances, the then Lord Mayor, Sir James Gallagher, J.P.,

organised a relief fund, which met with a generous response from the public, and the amount so obtained being liberally placed at the disposal of the Representative Committee for distribution materially strengthened that Committee in their endeavours to deal sympathetically with all applicants found to be in distress. The pressure lasted for several weeks, and was then only partially relieved by the gradual absorption of unemployed persons by firms which had re-established themselves in temporary premises.

Previous to the outbreak, the Labour Exchange returns indicated that the number of women in Dublin seeking work was unduly high, and throughout the year the problem of unemployment remained a difficult one to deal with, complicated as it was towards the close by the adverse conditions arising out of a continuance of the war, the high cost of the necessities of life, the restrictions on mercantile shipping, the curtailment of the brewing and distilling industries, the augmented stringency in the luxury trades, and the increasing difficulty in obtaining supplies of sugar and other raw materials for manufacturing processes, in which a considerable number of women were engaged. The male labour so affected was to a large extent provided for by the continued need for the services of men in Great Britain on works connected with the prosecution of the war, but in order to deal with disemployed women workers the Local Representative Committee found it necessary to enlarge the measure of their operations. It was apparent, however, that within the limited scope of grants from the National Relief Fund, and the other resources at the disposal of the Committee, the situation could not be fully met by relief schemes alone, and in May, 1916, and again in the following December, we approached the Ministry of Munitions suggesting an extension of war work in Dublin. This course, being subject to the necessities of the State in the matter of the manufacture of munitions, was acceded to as far as possible, and proved helpful, many women, including several who had received relief munition training through the agency of the Local Representative Committee, becoming wage earners in the National Shell Factory before the close of the year.

In the determination of the nature and subsequent organisation of the additional relief training that was necessary, the Local Representative Committee had the close co-operation of the Central Advisory Committee on Women's Employment for Leinster, Munster and Connaught. It was considered that the development of the lighter industries of glove and sock-making not only afforded immediate benefit by supplying the urgent requirements of the Army and Navy in the matter of equipment, but likewise presented a reasonable prospect of permanent employment after the war. On these grounds we assented to the adoption of the proposals, with which was coupled an extension of the power machine scheme dealt with in our last

report. A definite opinion cannot yet be formed as to the ultimate success of the operations, but it may be confidently expected of those undergoing training that use will be made of the experience gained and the technical skill acquired. The advances made by us for the provision of machinery and the starting of the schemes amounted to a sum of £923 1s. 11d. We append an extract from a report of the Central Committee bearing on this work :

" The Central Committee co-operated in a scheme of the Local Representative Committee for the training of women on relief grants in both hand and machine glove knitting. In the furtherance of this scheme the Committee entered into part possession of the premises, 15 Parliament Street, and upon the authority of the Local Government Board for Ireland, and with advances made by that Board for the purposes of training, the Committee purchased 49 glove-knitting machines at a cost of £5 15s. 6d. each, and procured a competent instructress.

" The Committee tendered for a Contract for 1,200 pairs of gloves from the War Office, which was accepted in July, 1916. This number was afterwards increased to 2,490, and the contract was completed in May, 1917. On this contract 45 workers were employed.

" In the actual process of training there was necessarily a considerable wastage of wool, involving loss. To set against this, there is the fact that 33 girls were trained, and are now most efficient wage earners, their wages being from 15/- to 25/- per week.

" On 21st March, 1917, a War Office contract was secured for the making of 21,600 pairs of gloves. With regard to this contract, which is still in progress, there is reason to believe that it will be carried out under circumstances more favourable than those of previous knitting contracts, the workers being concentrated in Upper Mount Street, nearer the Committee's central office, where facilities are obtainable for storage, and where supervision can be more effectively maintained.

" A further extension of the work of the Central Committee is that which has to do with the initiation and development of the hand glove-knitting industry, which was started in co-operation with the City Relief Committee, and is of an essentially relief character.

" During the year ended March 31st, 1917, over forty girls, trained in the Power Machine Workroom, had places found for them in the Dublin Factories. The Power Workroom was removed in April, 1916, from 24 Wicklow Street to 15 Parliament Street, and a more powerful Motor was procured. There are now twelve machines in use at 15 Parliament Street, one being a double-needle machine."

The Central Committee, however, continued to be chiefly concerned with assisting in the execution of Government contract work, which they distributed as far as possible in centres where unemployment amongst women existed, with a view to the prevention of distress. For this purpose an additional sum of £900 was advanced to them out of the National Relief Fund. We quote the following extract from the Committee's report on their labours under this head :

" On the 30th March, 1916, a Contract was secured from the War Office for the making of 30,000 Army Shirts, which was afterwards extended to 40,000. This contract kept the workrooms fully occupied for a short time only, as the supply of flannel then became intermittent, and involved the Committee in unexpected delay and expense. During the course of the year, work was given to the following places in the provinces :—Bray, Cork, Nenagh, New Ross, Killarney, Limerick, Sligo.

" At the present time a contract is being carried out, which was secured on 2nd March, 1917, for the manufacture of 1,500 shirts weekly for an indefinite period, the Royal Army Clothing Department supplying the material.

" The want of centralisation and the difficulties of transport between the different workrooms scattered all over the City and country all add to the difficulties of making the contracts a financial success. That the Committee has undertaken and can continue to undertake contracts under such overwhelming and difficult conditions is due entirely to their anxiety to keep employed a large number of women who would otherwise be pauperised and go to swell the list of unemployed requiring relief."

Further relief works that were necessary in Dublin before the close of the year partook of measures for the training of unemployed girls in domestic science and market gardening, the latter project being considered a suitable adjunct to the Farm Colony work carried on by the Local Representative Committee in conjunction with the City of Dublin Distress Committee. Encouraged by the success which met their efforts in the past year on the grounds at their disposal at Fairview, the Committees decided, in January, 1917, to extend the policy of combining relief work with food production, and further lands to the extent of twenty-six acres were acquired with our approval in the neighbourhood of Clontarf. The lands have since been placed under cultivation, and it is anticipated by the Committees that the crops when marketed will fully cover the capital expenditure involved. Under all heads the Local Representative Committee's operations during the year involved an expenditure of £5,650 from the National Relief Fund, while, with the approval of the Authorities in London controlling the

Fund, a further sum of £1,200 was granted for the provision of coal as a supplementary relief measure during the Winter months, which proved unusually severe.

It is gratifying to record that elsewhere in Ireland abnormal distress did not exist to any appreciable extent, and although amongst the wage earning classes the enhanced cost of living was much felt, the conditions which prevailed were generally favourable, particularly in rural centres where farm produce continued to realise high prices. In Belfast and Londonderry it was not found necessary by the Local Relief Committees to afford any assistance, and in Cork the relief given during a temporary period of distress was covered by a grant of £40. In six Urban centres relief operations on a limited scale were carried on, involving an expenditure of £460 8s. 7d., while a sum of £365 17s. 11d. was absorbed in grants for isolated cases in areas in which no local representative committees were formed. The advances and grants issued by us during the year thus amounted to £14,837 4s. 11d.

The total number of persons representing heads of families or single persons relieved through Local Representative Committees from grants out of the National Relief Fund was, during the first half of the year, 2,718, of which 1,050 were men and 1,668 women, and during the second half of the year 1,149, of which 283 were men and 866 women. The corresponding figures for the year ended the 31st March, 1916, were, during the first half of the year, 1,677, of which 283 were men and 1,394 women, and during the second half of the year, 623, of which 128 were men and 495 women.

DEPENDANTS OF SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.

The provision of assistance to dependants of Sailors and Soldiers, pending the grant of separation allowance, having devolved upon the Local Committees established under the Naval and Military War Pensions, etc., Act, 1915, it was not necessary for us to make any grants from the National Relief Fund for this purpose during the year. The investigation of claims to separation allowances of dependants of sailors and soldiers, other than wives and children, continued to remain in the hands of the Old Age Pension Committees.

BRITISH-BORN WIVES AND CHILDREN OF INTERNED ALIENS AND OTHER DESTITUTE ALIENS.

The arrangements for the provision of assistance through Boards of Guardians to the British-born wives and children of interned aliens were continued throughout the year, the relief so afforded being recouped quarterly by us to the Guardians. The expenditure amounted to £2,357 0s. 3d., as compared with £1,585 12s. 0d. for the previous year. We also reconed a sum of £46 4s. 9d. in respect of the cost of maintenance of

three lunatic aliens who were inmates of a District Asylum. We received no applications from Boards of Guardians for recoupment of assistance afforded to other destitute aliens. In March, 1917, with the approval of the Treasury, the maximum allowance for a British-born wife was increased to 10/- a week and for each dependent child to 3/- a week.

Towards the end of the year we obtained authority from the Treasury to repay the cost of relief given by the Guardians in cases where an alien is repatriated and his British-born wife and children need relief, and also the cost of such assistance as it may be necessary to continue to the British-born wife and family of an alien when released from internment to undertake farm work. In calculating the amount to be given in the latter case, a contribution of at least 5/- a week, or, if the weekly wages do not exceed 7/6, one half of the actual money wages is assumed to be made by the husband, the allowance which would otherwise be payable to the wife and family being correspondingly reduced. In one instance, under each of these heads, assistance was afforded within the year.

FOOD PRODUCTION.

(a) *Urban Areas.*

With a view to increasing the area of land under cultivation in Ireland and securing additional food supply for the population, arrangements were made, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, pending Parliamentary sanction, enabling Borough and Urban District Councils to take by agreement land for a period not exceeding four years, either within the municipal area or in the immediate vicinity thereof, for the purpose of letting it in workmen's allotments. Provision was also made for the advance of money upon the security of the rates to defray the preliminary expenses incurred in connection with the renting and letting of the land, and with the obtaining of seeds and manures, pending repayment by the allotment holders.

These measures met with a gratifying response from the Urban Authorities, to whom they were communicated on the 3rd January, 1917, and from the outset keen interest was evinced in getting the project started. For the general guidance of the Councils we issued regulations for the carrying out of an allotments scheme, and facilities were made available for the supply of early and late variety of potatoes, vegetable seeds and artificial manures through the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. In the regulations it was laid down that allotments should not exceed one-eighth of a statute acre, and that no allotment should be provided for any person already in occupation of land of greater extent than this area.

The necessary lands were obtained for the most part by agreements at rents varying from £1 to £7 a statute acre, but in the larger centres of population portions of the public parks

under the control of the local Authorities were utilised. Compulsory powers were also made available by the Defence of the Realm Regulations through the Department of Agriculture, where land was immediately required for cultivation in allotments and its use for that purpose was unreasonably withheld. Such powers were sought in 11 Urban Districts, and in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture we arranged to inquire locally into the circumstances. In five of the districts the acreage desired for allotments was obtained by agreement during the course of our inquiries, while in three other centres we were unable to recommend the exercise of compulsory powers, as the conditions laid down in the Defence of the Realm Regulations had not in our opinion been complied with. Only in three instances were compulsory powers for land for Urban allotments recommended by us and exercised by the Department of Agriculture.

By the end of March, 1917, allotment schemes had been provided in 76 County Borough and Urban Districts, and the total area under cultivation comprised 1,375 statute acres, the number of allotments being approximately 12,000.*

(b) *Rural Areas.*

As regards Rural Districts, we issued on the 22nd January last a circular to the several Councils pointing out the necessity for increasing the food production of the country, and drawing their attention to the provision contained in Section 16 of the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1883, whereby tracts of lands might be acquired by agreement with the owners for the purpose of being parcelled out into allotments for the use of labourers living in villages or towns other than Urban Districts. In order to avoid capital expenditure on this head, we also pointed out that such lands should not be purchased but taken only for a short term of years. Advantage was taken of this provision in 21 Rural Districts, and 607 allotments, aggregating 272 acres 2 rods and 4 perches were acquired and let to labourers. The periods for which the lands were taken varied from one to five years, three years being the period accepted in the generality of cases.

These allotments were intended for members of the labouring class, other than those already provided with garden allotments in connection with cottages erected under the Labourers Acts. Of these latter, 47,349 had been provided on the 31st March last, made up as follows:—17,335 with gardens not exceeding half a statute acre, 2,414 with gardens between half and three-quarters of an acre, and 27,600 with gardens between three-quarters and a statute acre.

*This figure includes 5,000 allotments in Belfast County Borough, which were provided by the Garden Plots Association in that City. Many of these plots were under cultivation prior to the year 1916-17.

We also issued Circulars to the Rural District Councils impressing upon them the necessity of requiring their tenants to till the whole area of the plots, where practicable, and we are glad to be able to state that both the Councils and the tenants most willingly responded to our efforts in this direction with the most satisfactory results.

(c) *Supply of Seed Potatoes, Seed Oats and Manure.*

The Government, in January, 1917, empowered us, in anticipation of legislative authority, to sanction loans to Rural District Councils to enable them to procure supplies of seed potatoes, seed oats and manure for distribution on credit to small land-holders and tenants of labourers' cottages who, while willing to sow increased areas in potatoes or oats, in view of the greatly enhanced prices prevailing, were themselves financially unable to purchase adequate supplies without such assistance, or where, owing to a shortage in last season's crop, they were unable to obtain adequate supplies.

Artificial manure was also authorised to be supplied, as there was a great shortage of good qualities in the local markets. The present scheme differed, therefore, from those which were formerly introduced on account of the failure of crops in the previous year. Formerly the local administration of such relief schemes was carried out through the medium of the Boards of Guardians, but it was decided to entrust the administration of this scheme to the Rural District Councils.

The conditions of supply also differed somewhat from those of previous occasions. Formerly occupiers of land, the ratesable value of which did not exceed £15, could be supplied; but, on this occasion, the limit was reduced to £10. Subject to an occupier being in possession of land rated at not more than this latter figure, he could obtain 12 cwt. of potatoes, 3 cwt. of oats and 6 cwt. of manure. Tenants of labourers' cottages and allotments could each procure 5 cwt. of potatoes, $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of oats and 2 cwt. of manure. It was not at first intended to permit non-rated cultivators of land (holders of con-acre) to be supplied under the scheme, but, subsequently (on the 3rd of March), the scheme was extended to embrace this class, subject to the provision by each such cultivator of a rated occupier, who would guarantee the repayment of the cost of any supplies advanced, and such a cultivator could then be supplied with 5 cwt. of potatoes and $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of oats.

The recipients, as in previous years, were held responsible for the total cost of the supplies distributed to them, including all expenses incurred for carriage, storage or otherwise in providing the supplies for sale. The rate of interest to be charged by the Commissioners of Public Works on loans advanced by them for the purpose was fixed at 5 per cent. per annum, and it was decided that the occupiers and the cultivators, through

the rated sureties provided by them, should discharge their obligations to the Councils by means of a rate levied either with the poor rate in 1918 or as a special rate that year, while the tenants of labourers' cottages and allotments were to repay the cost with their rents by means of equal weekly or monthly instalments, as the case might be, spread over a period of one year from the 1st of October, 1917. The Rural District Councils are to repay the loans, with the interest, in full on or before the 1st of February, 1919.

Owing to the enormously enhanced prices occasioned by the war, the Government decided to empower the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction to arrange with wholesale merchants for the supply of the required seed and manure at standard rates, and the Department were also entrusted with the inspection of the supplies. The Department succeeded in arranging for the supplies at the following rates, including the cost of the bags—free on rail—at the supplier's station :

Potatoes (Up-to-Date) variety	...	at £10 5 0 per ton.
Oats (white) in 1 cwt. bags	...	at £18 13 4 "
and in $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. bags	...	at £19 0 0 "
Oats (black) in 1 cwt. bags	...	at £17 6 8 "
and in $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. bags	...	at £17 13 4 "
Manure (for 6 tons and upwards)	at £ 8 0 0	"
and for lesser quantities	...	at £ 8 5 0 "

A preliminary announcement of the introduction of the scheme by the Government was issued by us to the Rural District Councils in Ireland on the 17th of January, 1917, and full information as to the Rules governing the scheme on the 23rd of that month. Of the 213 Rural District Councils, 130 availed themselves of the facilities offered, their districts being situated in 32 of the 33 counties. In 125 districts potatoes were supplied; in 124, oats; and in 121, manure.

In all, 5,974 tons of seed potatoes, 1,906½ tons of seed oats and 2,861½ tons of manure were purchased and distributed among 29,266 occupiers, 1,270 cultivators, and 11,290 tenants of labourers' cottages and allotments, the total amount of loans sanctioned by the Board being £134,588 8s. 2d.*

BELGIAN REFUGEES.

The Belgian Refugees Committee have furnished the following report on their proceedings :—

" The number of refugees under the care of the Committee declined considerably during the year ended 31st March, 1917. At the beginning of the year there were more than 1,000 refugees provided for in Ireland, whilst at the end of the year the number was approximately 600.

* Nine Councils defrayed the cost of the schemes carried out by them out of their current revenue—the expenditure involved being £1,472 8s. 10d.

" Some of the Committees formed at the beginning of the war with the object of affording hospitality to Belgian refugees are still in existence, and are carrying on successfully their charitable work of national importance. Most of the Refugee Committees, however, were formed for short periods, and have now ceased to exist, with the result that the cost of the maintenance of the unemployed refugees at present in Ireland falls to a greater extent than hitherto on Government funds; but it is estimated that at the end of the year about 50 per cent. of the refugees in Ireland were still maintained without assistance from public funds. The Committee desire to take this opportunity of thanking the local Committees and the generous subscribers who have enabled them to achieve so creditable a result.

" Employment was found by the Committee for a large number of refugees, chiefly at munitions work in England; the total number who left Ireland for this reason was 335, including workers and their dependants.

" The educational institutions throughout the country have continued to afford the Committee valuable help by receiving and educating refugee children, most of whom have made excellent progress and taken every advantage of the tuition provided for them. Some of the Belgian students are following successful courses at the National University at the Colleges in Dublin and Galway.

" The Benedictine Nuns of Ypres, whose establishment at Macmine, County Wexford, evoked considerable public interest and sympathy, are continuing at Macmine the educational work for which their Convent at Ypres was so renowned.

" Father Ottavaere, the Belgian Jesuit, still continues to take principal charge of the spiritual needs of the refugees, and the Committee are deeply indebted to him for his wise counsel, generous help and tireless zeal, which are always at their disposal in the interest of the refugees. Father Ottavaere is assisted in his work by the Belgian Redemptorist Fathers in Belfast, by the Belgian Carmelite Fathers in Dublin, and by a Belgian Priest, Father Moors, in the north-western district.

" The Belgian colony at Dunshaughlin, County Meath, continued its good work throughout the year under the management of Monsieur Schepers, and the supervision of Mr. F. J. MacCarthy, Local Government Inspector. The Committee desire, in this connection, to express their appreciation of the services so kindly and so willingly rendered to the refugees by the Reverend B. Guinan, P.P., Chaplain to the Workhouse; the Medical Officer of the Workhouse, Dr. O'Reilly; the Master of the Workhouse, Mr. Mahon; Nurse Armstrong, and the Matron. The Committee will take another and more suitable opportunity of recording the debt under which Monsieur Schepers has placed them by his whole-hearted devotion to the work of administering the colony.

"The health of the refugees throughout the year was, on the whole, excellent. The Committee still receive generous help from the medical profession and from the public hospitals in cases of illness amongst the refugees. The number of refugees who died during the year was four, whilst the number of births was nine.

"The President of the Committee, Mrs. Fowle, organised a sale of objets d'art and antiques in July, 1916, at a shop in Grafton Street, kindly lent by Messrs. Switzer and Co.; the shop was known as the "Belgian Gift Shop." Many generous friends gave articles of value for sale, and Mrs. Fowle was able, as a result of her efforts, to hand over a considerable sum in aid of the Committee's funds.

"The office administration and clerical work were carried out during the year to the Committee's complete satisfaction by the staff provided for that purpose by the Local Government Board. Miss Boland, with the assistance of Miss Burke-Gaffney, still continues to take charge of the work of the Clothing Sub-Committee."

II.—POOR RELIEF.

Statistics of Pauperism.

The following statement, compiled from the weekly returns furnished to us by Clerks of Unions, shows the numbers in receipt of the different forms of relief on the last Saturday of March in each of the past five years:—

		1917	1916	1915	1914	1913
In Workhouses,	Sick in workhouse hospitals and infirmaries ...	13,296	14,046	14,430	14,903	14,384
	Aged and infirm in workhouses ...	8,295	8,788	9,152	10,002	10,605
	Children under 15 in workhouses other than those sick in hospital	3,756	3,769	3,082	4,601	4,861
	Lunatics, idiots, and epileptics other than those sick in hospital	1,884	1,934	2,024	2,110	2,145
	Mothers having infant children ...	484	539	475	570	621
	All other classes ...	2,748	2,820	3,193	3,942	4,339
In extern Institutions or Homes,	In extern hospitals ...	388	306	324	327	306
	In institutions for the blind, deaf, and dumb, and idiots and imbeciles.	903	972	996	969	985
	In Trim and Glan district schools ...	344	334	342	327	347
	Children out at nurse or boarded-out	2,394	2,495	2,565	2,572	2,589
On Outdoor Relief (other than children boarded-out and in certified schools).	Children in certified schools ...	77	65	76	100	85
	Under Sec. 1 of Art 10 Vic., c. 31 ...	31,773	31,816	34,916	34,515	34,987
	Under Sec. 7 of Art 10 Vic., c. 31, and Sec. 4 of 11 and 12 Vic., c. 47	1,054	983	1,033	1,029	1,460
	Under Orders pursuant to Sec. 13 of the Local Govt. (I.) Act 1896.	—	—	—	—	—
Total number of persons in receipt of relief on last Saturday in March		67,622	68,864	73,508	76,093	77,718
Average daily number.	Indoor (including those in extern institutions)	31,386	32,095	34,770	36,183	37,055
	Outdoor ...	34,558	36,658	37,837	38,653	38,637
Total daily average number on Indoor and Outdoor relief ...		65,942	68,753	72,607	74,236	77,392

In previous reports we have called attention to the great decrease which had taken place in the number of persons in receipt of relief since 1910.

It will be seen from the foregoing that there was a further decrease of 1,336 at the end of the year under review as compared with the preceding year in the number maintained in Workhouses; the decrease in the number of sick was 648; in the aged and infirm, 493; in the children, 18; in the lunatics and idiots (excluding those in hospital), 50; and in all other classes (including the able-bodied), 77.

The decrease in the average number of all classes of indoor paupers throughout the year was 709.

The number in receipt of outdoor relief was 28 more on Saturday, 31st March, 1917, than on Saturday, 25th March, 1916, but there was a decrease in the average number for the whole year of 2,102.

The reduction in the number obtaining Poor Relief is to some extent due to the migration of labourers to Great Britain, and the consequent opening for employment for the less fit, but, perhaps, in a larger measure to the fact that a number of the classes formerly chargeable to the rates are now in receipt of separation and dependants' allowances.

The total average number in receipt of both forms of relief during the year—viz., 65,950, represented a pauperism of 1 in every 66 of the estimated population of the country, as compared with 1 in every 43, ten years ago.

Pauper Children.

As regards the pauper children, for whose relief the Guardians are responsible, 344 were, on the 31st March last, maintained in the two District Schools of Trim and Glin; 650 were located in the Poor Law Schools at Cabra and Pelletstown; 77 were in schools certified by us under the Pauper Children Acts, and 2,394 were boarded out in foster homes throughout the country.

The number of children maintained in workhouses has decreased from 3,769 to 3,756 since the date of our last Report.

Lunatics, Idiots and Epileptics.

As already stated, there has been a decrease in the number of this class, maintained in the workhouse, of 50 as compared with the preceding year, or of 261 as compared with the year 1913. There are, however, still 1,884 of these afflicted persons maintained in Irish workhouses, besides those sick in hospital. This number does not include 400 inmates of the Asylum at Grosvenor Road, Belfast, who are temporarily accommodated in a portion of the Belfast Workhouse owing to the occupation of the Asylum by the Military Authorities.

Deaths in Workhouses.

The total number of deaths in workhouses during the period of 53 weeks under review was 10,634, being an increase of 653 on the previous year, which included a period of 52 weeks only.

The deaths included 14 centenarians, one of whom was stated to have been 108 years, and three others were believed to have reached 106 years.

There were 1,721 deaths from tuberculosis, as compared with 1,567 in the preceding year. It is, however, satisfactory to note that this number is considerably under the average for the preceding 5 years—viz., 1,805.

There was an increase of 56 in the number of deaths of infants and children during the year, their being an increase of 59 in the infants under 1 year, a decrease of 21 in those from 1 to 5 years, and an increase of 18 in children aged from 5 to 15 years.

The deaths from scarlatina were 86 less than in the preceding year.

The deaths from cancer were 19 less than in previous year, but the number was still somewhat over the average for the preceding five years.

Nursing in Workhouse Hospitals.

The nursing staffs in Workhouse Hospitals were much the same as in previous year. There were 276 "trained" and 247 "qualified" nurses: 368 nursing sisters (Nuns) and 170 probationer nurses. The number of pauper attendants was still further reduced by the appointment of five additional paid attendants.

Dietaries of Inmates and Rations of Officers.

Immediately after the issue of the Food Controller's warning in February last, we issued a circular letter to Guardians impressing on them the necessity for curtailment in the consumption of bread, meat and sugar. In a further pronouncement the Food Controller stated that cereals generally were to be regarded in the same category as flour. This, coupled with the shortage of potatoes and the difficulty of obtaining at a reasonable price such imported articles as haricot beans, lentils, etc., all tended to make the task of catering for the inmates a formidable problem. The Guardians were obliged, under the circumstances, to make the best arrangements they could, and we approved of alterations in the dietaries which we would not have assented to under normal conditions.

As regards the officers, we are glad to say that in a large number of Unions, scales of rations of which we could approve were amicably arranged between the Guardians and their staff. In some cases, however, we were obliged to exercise our powers under Sec. 31 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1898, and regulate the allowance by Order under seal.

Emigration.

We issued six consent orders authorising assisted emigration of 16 persons during the year ended 31st March, 1917, the

expenditure incurred being £31 0s. Od. This assistance was given by the Guardians out of the rates towards defraying the cost of the outfits, etc., of persons emigrating to relatives who were in a position to maintain them and to provide them with employment.

Expenditure on Poor Relief.

The following summary, compiled from the abstracts of Union accounts, gives the main figures of interest in connection with poor law expenditure from revenue during the year ended 30th September, 1916, and the preceding year :—

	1916.	1915.
Poor Relief, other than Dispensary Medical Relief under the Medical Charities Act :—		
In-maintenance .. .	506,942	471,209
Out Relief .. .	139,016	138,839
Salaries and rations of officers .. .	246,934	230,664
Children boarded out .. .	23,694	23,665
Children maintained in Trim and Glin district schools .. .	8,452	8,455
Cost of maintenance of paupers sent to external hospitals, asylums for the blind, &c., by Guardians .. .	26,792	26,212
Cost of medicines in workhouses .. .	12,964	12,324
Other expenses .. .	145,594	156,858
Total .. .	1,110,388	1,073,626
Expenditure under the Medical Charities Act, and other Acts administered by the Guardians .. .	297,133	284,212
Total poor relief expenditure .. .	1,407,521	1,357,838

It will be observed that there was an increase of £49,683 in the total poor relief expenditure during the year, occasioned by the enormously enhanced price of the various commodities.

Amalgamation of Unions.

During the year under review we issued Orders under Seal dissolving the Unions of Cootehill, Killala and Mitchelstown. The Union of Cootehill was amalgamated with the Clones and Cavan Unions, the Rural District of Cootehill No. 1 with the Rural District of Cavan, and the Rural District of Cootehill No. 2 with the Rural District of Clones No. 1.

Killala Union was amalgamated with Ballina Union, and the Killala Rural District with Ballina Rural District. Mitchelstown Union was amalgamated with Fermoy Union, but the Mitchelstown No. 1 and No. 2 Rural Districts were continued as separate Rural Districts.

Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1914.

In August, 1914, the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1914, was passed, authorising the Local Government Board to modify or repeal, for any purpose in connection with the present war, the provisions of Section 9 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1847, which prohibits the giving of relief from the poor rates of a Union to any person not being within the Union when so relieved.

The object of this provision was to enable the Boards of Guardians of Unions, the workhouses of which had been taken over by the Military Authorities for the accommodation of troops or interned aliens, to transfer the inmates to the workhouses of other Unions. The Military took, and still retain possession of, the workhouses at Oldcastle and Tipperary, and also acquired, but subsequently surrendered, the workhouses of Antrim, Dunshaughlin, Mallow and Mitchelstown — Dunshaughlin Workhouse is at present used as a distributing centre for the Belgian Refugees.

From the experience thus gained, it became evident that economy in local expenditure would ensue if a more general power were given for the reception and treatment of the destitute poor of one Union in the Workhouse of another; and, accordingly, the provisions of the Act of 1914 were extended by the Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1916, so as to include within its purview not only the purposes of the war, but also those for the better administration of the poor law generally.

The widening of the powers of affording relief outside a Union effected by the Act of 1916 has resulted in the preparation of schemes for the closing of Workhouses in whole or in part, and for placing the inmates affected thereby in neighbouring workhouses, without interfering with the local administration of the transferring Union by the Guardians of that Union.

In the cases of Castlecomer and Clogher Unions, Orders dated, respectively, the 28th February, 1917, and 20th September, 1916, were made enabling the destitute poor from the former Union to be relieved in Thomastown Workhouse and from the latter Union in Enniskillen Workhouse. The Guardians, however, of both Unions decided not to transfer the sick.

In the Antrim Union, on the Military surrendering the Workhouse, the Guardians resolved to retain the hospitals and to transfer the healthy inmates permanently to Ballymena.

The Guardians of Callan, Dunshaughlin, Dunfanaghy and Irvinestown have in contemplation similar arrangements, and a saving in public expenditure is anticipated from the gradual aggregation of the destitute poor in a few well-equipped workhouses in a county instead of their being scattered over a large number of half-filled institutions supervised by a comparatively large staff of officials.

Dispensary Medical Relief.

The following is a summary of the cases in which medical relief was afforded, and of the expenditure under the Medical Charities Act during the year under review, and the previous year, arranged under the usual headings :—

		Year ended 31st March, 1917.	Previous year.
Number of new cases attended and registered during the Year :—			
1. At Dispensaries	435,681	436,878	
2. At Patients' homes	154,033	154,217	
Total number of new cases	589,714	591,095	
Number of Vaccinations and Re-vaccinations performed	65,849	75,045	
Salaries of Dispensary Medical Officers	£ 109,604	£ 108,693	
Remuneration of temporary Dispensary Medical Officers	18,203	16,351	
Total payment in respect of salaries of permanent and remuneration of temporary Medical Officers,	127,807	125,044	
Salaries and payments for temporary services of Compounders of Medicine	4,033	3,986	
Salaries of Midwives	20,327	20,124	
Cost of medicines and appliances	24,083	19,114	
Expenditure from Loans under the Dispensary Houses Act, 1879	1,319	5,012	
Other expenses	27,025	28,743	
Amount of fees paid to Medical Officers under the Compulsory Vaccination Act, 1879	6,637	7,719	
Total expenses of Dispensary Districts	211,231	209,742	

Medical Relief Cases.

In the past year, 435,681 cases were reported to us on the prescribed forms as having been attended by the Medical Officers at the Dispensaries, and 154,033 at the patients' own homes. These figures were not quite complete, inasmuch as full statistics had not been furnished from five Dispensary Districts which were in charge of temporary Medical Officers, to whose appointments we had refused sanction.

Salaries of Medical Officers.

Improved scales of remuneration for the Medical Officers of five additional Unions were adopted with our sanction during the past year. Improved scales were in operation at the end of March last in 108 Unions.

The salaries paid to the Dispensary Medical Officers during the past financial year amounted to the sum of £109,604, being an increase of over £900 as compared with the previous year, due to the adoption of the new scales and the increments of salary which accrued in the twelve months under scales formerly adopted.

Although the scheme of War Bonuses to Civil Servants contained no provision applying to a class of part-time officials with a status in any way similar to that of Medical Officers, still some few Boards of Guardians submitted proposals to us for the grant of war bonuses to their medical officers. In our replies we pointed out the difference between the Government scheme and the Guardians' proposals, and suggested that the claims of the medical officers might be dealt with on a permanent basis by an improvement in their salaries, and we are happy to add that Guardians fell in with that suggestion.

Vacancies in the Staff of Medical Officers.

As intimated by Circular Letter of the 26th November, 1915, we have since that date refused sanction to the filling up permanently of all vacancies that arose in the Poor Law Medical Service. We observed from the outset that the bulk of the Doctors appointed to act temporarily, both in vacant posts and also as substitutes for Medical Officers who had volunteered for active service with His Majesty's Forces, were of military age, and apparently eligible for service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. We were aware of the deplorable shortage of Doctors for the Army, and knew from our local knowledge that Guardians in the vast majority of the districts in this country were in a position to make sufficient arrangements for the care of the sick poor without employing so many young Doctors, and we accordingly refused our approval to a large number of the temporary appointments.

Strong objection has, in several cases, been expressed to our action, and its legality has been publicly questioned. Three or four of the Boards of Guardians consulted Senior Counsel with the view to taking legal proceedings. The Rathdown Board of Guardians went further, and applied for and obtained from the High Court a conditional order for a Writ of Mandamus to test the question; but, before the date of trial, the Doctor appointed by them submitted two medical certificates, which were placed before us, and showed that he was unfit for service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. These certificates removed the ground of our objection to the temporary appointment, and we so informed the Guardians, who thereupon abandoned the action, and consequently a judicial decision on the law point was not obtained. The Lismore Board of Guardians have now commenced proceedings on the same issue as that raised by the Rathdown Guardians, and their case is at present before the Court.

We may add that we were advised that there is an absolute discretion vested in us by Law in regard to sanction to these appointments, and that we can refuse approval thereto as we think proper, for any reason or without giving any reason.

Midwives.

787 midwives are employed and paid salaries by Boards of Guardians for attending maternity cases occurring amongst the labouring and other classes of poor persons entitled to free medical aid under the Medical Charities Act. The area included in the sphere of duty of these midwives embraces 682 out of the total of 741 dispensary districts in Ireland.

We have not received any serious complaint either as respects insufficiency or indifferent quality of midwifery nursing available in the remaining 59 dispensary districts, and we presume there are no valid grounds for complaint.

The Medical Charities Act empowers us, in the event of its being shown at any time to our satisfaction that a midwife is required in any particular dispensary district, to issue an Order directing the Board of Guardians concerned to make the appointment.

Notwithstanding the staff of dispensary midwives, and the large number of highly qualified private midwives who engage in practice, we regret to have to report that untrained women are employed to a very large extent as midwifery nurses. We ascertained recently that in the important Town of Lisburn as many as fourteen such women were in practice in the town and immediate neighbourhood, and that the services of the qualified midwife appointed by the Guardians were not much availed of by patients of the dispensary class.

The Corporation of Belfast realised so far back as 1911 the necessity for efficient control and supervision of the midwives practising in their city, and, in a private Bill promoted that year in Parliament, sought and were granted powers to establish a midwives roll for the County Borough, to grant certificates of enrolment when the circumstances justified that course, to prohibit uncertificated midwives from practising within the city, and to exercise supervision over the nurses and their practice (Sections 52 to 60 of the Act 1 and 2, Geo. V., Ch. exc.) Since the 1st January, 1913, the Corporation have exercised these functions with good and satisfactory results; and we should be glad to see a Bill for Ireland passed on the lines of the English and Scotch Midwives Acts.

Contracts for Drugs, etc., to the Poor Law Unions.

The contract prices for the year 1916-17 were much in excess of those payable in the previous year, and, in consequence, there has been a large increase in the Guardians' expenditure upon the drugs and surgical instruments and appliances procured for use in the workhouse hospitals and dispensaries.

The quality of the supplies has been good, and this result has been achieved in face of the very adverse conditions which during the period affected the Trade. We wish to add that medical officers generally made strenuous efforts to prevent any wastage of their medical stores.

VACCINATIONS.

(1) Number of Operations.

The following table shows the number of successful vaccinations performed during the year by the Medical Officers of Dispensary Districts and Workhouses, and by Dr. Montgomery at our Vaccine Institute in Dublin :—

	Primary Vaccinations	Re- Vaccinations	Total Vaccinations
BY DISPENSARY MEDICAL OFFICERS,	64,396	1,453	65,849
BY WORKHOUSE MEDICAL OFFICERS,	427	48	475
AT THE VACCINE INSTITUTE, ...	460	22	482
TOTAL, ...	65,283	1,523	66,806

The primary vaccinations of the Poor Law Medical Officers and Dr. Montgomery during the preceding quinquennial period are shown in the following summary :—

Year ended 31st March, 1912	...	74,469
" " 1913	...	66,691
" " 1914	...	69,345
" " 1915	...	63,158
" " 1916	...	74,198

The reduction of primary vaccinations from 74,198 in 1916 to 65,283 in the year ended 31st March last was due mainly to the interruption caused by the Rebellion of April, 1916. Vaccinations are performed in large numbers during the months of May and June, and it was obviously impossible last year for parents, owing to the disturbed condition of the country and the general upset, to attend systematically during the months in question to so routine a matter as the vaccination of their infants.

The weather in the autumn and winter was adverse, and impeded vaccinations.

Guardians are now being pressed to administer the Vaccination acts energetically, and to clear off the arrears. It became necessary recently to institute proceedings in the High Court for a Writ of Mandamus against the Enniscorthy Board of Guardians, who had declined to enforce the Law. This is the second occasion within a couple of years that these Guardians

have taken up that attitude. They appear to have been influenced by an Anti-Vaccination Society, which was started at Enniscorthy about five or six years ago to promote in this country the agitation against vaccination, waged in England by the National Anti-Vaccination League, having its headquarters at London. The Irish Branch Society has become very active in circulating the pamphlets and leaflets published by the English organisation, and in endeavouring to stir up opposition to vaccination in Ireland.

(2) Vaccine Department.

The supplies of glycerinated calf lymph have, as in previous years, been obtained by us under contract from Dr. Knox Denham, of the National Vaccine Institute, Sandymount Green, Dublin, and the lymph has been distributed by Dr. Montgomery, Secretary of our Vaccine Department, amongst the Medical Officers of Dispensary Districts and Workhouses as required from time to time for public vaccinations.

The following table shows the number of tubes distributed :

Issued to Medical Officers of	Year ended the	
	31st March, 1917.	Previous Year.
Workhouses	Tubes. ... 1,157	Tubes. ... 1,235
Dispensary Districts	... 102,717	... 119,064

Favourable reports respecting the quality of the lymph were furnished by our Bacteriologist, Professor E. J. McWeeney; by Dr. Montgomery, Secretary of our Vaccine Department; and also by Poor Law Medical Officers who had obtained supplies.

Dispensary Houses (Ireland) Act, 1879 (42 & 43 Vic., c. 25).

In our report for 1915 we intimated that, having regard to the limitations placed at the present juncture by His Majesty's Treasury upon borrowing and capital expenditure by Local Bodies, further undertakings by Guardians under the Dispensary Houses Act should be deferred, and accordingly there is nothing to report under the Act for the past year.

III.—PUBLIC HEALTH, ETC., ACTS.

We have received reports from our Medical Inspectors giving details as to the general state of the sanitation and public health of their respective districts, and also full particulars respecting any serious outbreaks of infectious disease which have occurred therein during the year. It would appear that the customary standard of local administration has been maintained, and that the incidence of infectious disease has on the whole been below

the average. The conditions arising out of the war, and involving the scarcity and high price of materials, as well as financial stringency, have operated against the execution of projects of sanitary improvement, and we have followed the policy of advising the postponement of all such works save in circumstances of proved and urgent necessity.

The death-rate of the principal town districts in Ireland in 1916 was 18·1 per thousand, or 1·2 below the corresponding figure for 1915. With the exception of enteric fever, all the principal epidemic diseases showed a reduction. The death-rate in the Irish Towns continues to be in excess of that of the great towns in England and Wales (14·4 per thousand in 1916), and of the larger Burghs of Scotland (14·9 per thousand in 1916). The highest death-rates recorded for the year 1916 occurred in Dublin County Borough (21·9 per thousand), Newry (20·7 per thousand), Waterford County Borough (19·3 per thousand), and Limerick County Borough (18·6 per thousand).

Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889.

On the 31st March, 1917, the provisions of this Act had been adopted in 163 Rural and 92 Urban Districts, the Districts in which the Act came into force for the first time being the Rural Districts of Bailieborough, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Cootehill No. 2, Donegal, Dunfanaghy, Dunmanway, Gorey; and the Urban Districts of Carrickmacross and Portstewart.

During the year there were 2,773 and 4,214 cases of infectious disease notified in Rural and Urban Districts, respectively, being a decrease of 3,348 in the total number of cases notified in the preceding year. A summary of notifications is contained in the subjoined table.

Disease.	Rural Districts.	Urban Districts.	Total	Disease.	Rural Districts.	Urban Districts.	Total
Small-pox ..	..	..	-	Typhoid fever	350	644	994
Cholera ..	..	..	-	Enteric Fever	228	117	345
Diphtheria ..	457	622	1,079	Relapsing Fever	..	..	..
Membranous Croup.	9	15	24	Continued Fever	2	36	38
Erysipelas ..	102	371	473	Puerperal Fever	14	23	37
Scarlatina or Scarlet Fever.	1,387	1,807	3,194	Other Diseases to which the Act has been applied.	170	523	693
Typhus Fever ..	54	56	110				
				TOTAL ..	2,773	4,214	6,987

Smallpox.

It is satisfactory to record that there has been no case of death from smallpox in any Workhouse during the year, nor in any year since 1908, when only one such death occurred. As regards cases treated by Medical Officers of Dispensary Districts there were five in 1908, one in 1913, and none since.

FEBRUARY.

Typhus Fever.

The cases of Typhus Fever notified under the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, numbered 110—practically the same as the previous year, when the number was 112. These figures, however, do not fully disclose the incidence of the disease, partly because notification of infectious diseases has not been universally adopted, and partly because, as investigation not infrequently shows, the initial cases in outbreaks of Typhus Fever are liable to escape recognition.

In Urban Districts the disease was prevalent in Belfast County Borough, where 46 cases were notified; the source from which the infection was conveyed was not ascertained. Twelve cases were reported as having occurred in the Dublin County Borough, where the outbreak was said to be due to overcrowding and general insanitary conditions.

In Rural Districts the largest outbreak occurred in the Oughterard Rural District, the number of cases notified being 25. This outbreak was said to be due to overcrowding and general insanitary conditions of the infected premises. Smaller outbreaks occurred in Tuam, Killadysert and Enniscorthy Rural Districts. The appearance of this disease is commonly associated with gross insanitary conditions and domestic overcrowding, and its prompt recognition is important in order to permit effective steps to be taken to prevent its spread.

Enteric Fever.

A few outbreaks of Enteric Fever of considerable extent were reported.

At Stradbally, in the Athy No. 2 Rural District, an outbreak occurred amongst the inmates of a School, resulting in forty seizures; the outbreak in this case was attributed to a "Carrier" who some time previous to his employment at the School had suffered from Enteric Fever. The boy was employed in the Dairy connected with the School, and was supposed to have infected the milk.

A number of cases also occurred in the Rathmines Urban District, Aughrim Dispensary District (Carrick-on-Shannon Rural District), Ardee No. 1, Callan, Shillelagh and Birr Rural Districts.

In Dublin County Borough, 285 cases occurred, no probable cause being assigned except defective drainage.

Cases of Fever Treated in Dispensary Districts.

The following table shows the number of cases of fever (other than scarlet fever) reported to us by Medical Officers of Dispensary Districts as having been attended by them in each of the last nine years :—

Year.	Number of cases.	Decrease compared with last preceding year.	Increase compared with last preceding year.
1909	1,170	—	20
1910	1,041	129	—
1911	1,039	2	—
1912	1,064	—	25
1913	785	279	—
1914	932	—	147
1915	890	42	—
1916	714	176	—
1917	854	—	140

On examination of these figures it will be seen that the number of fever cases in Ireland reported by Medical Officers of Dispensary Districts during the past year shows an increase of 140 on the preceding year, when the number was the lowest on record. There has been a remarkable diminution of fever since 1878, the year in which the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 41 and 42 Vic., cap. 52, became law, when nearly 11,000 cases were reported.

Scarlatina.

Scarlatina has been prevalent throughout the country, both Urban and Rural Districts being affected with visitations. The mild type of the disease has in many instances been noted, and this characteristic has tended to facilitate its spread. There has been a welcome reduction in the number of cases notified in Belfast County Borough and the neighbouring districts.

The number of cases of Scarlet Fever (1,699) treated by Medical Officers of Dispensary Districts in the year ended the 31st March, 1917, was 1,080 less than the number so treated in the previous year.

Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis.

Sporadic cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis have occurred in various districts throughout the country, but have given no ground for apprehension. The district principally affected appears, like the previous year, to have been Belfast County Borough; but towards the end of the year very few cases were notified. The Medical Officers of districts in which troops are

quartered continue to give the Military Authorities prompt information of any cases of the disease occurring among the civil population.

Tuberculosis.

The notification of Tuberculosis in pursuance of Part I. of the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908, has made steady progress, and now extends to 82 Sanitary Districts containing over a third of the entire population of Ireland. Particulars are given in the following table :—

Urban Districts and Date of Commencement.	Urban Districts and Date of Commencement.
Belfast Co. Borough.—2nd Nov., 1909.	Enniscorthy.—17th May, 1915.
Dublin Co. Borough.—1st Oct., 1909.	Galway.—10th Jan., 1916.
Waterford Co. Borough—1st March, 1914.	Kells.—1st Nov., 1916.
Armagh.—1st Feb., 1910.	Kingstown.—21st Nov., 1909.
Athlone.—1st April, 1915.	Larne.—1st Dec., 1914.
Athy—1st Feb., 1910.	Lismavady.—1st Jan., 1910.
Ballymena.—1st Nov., 1909.	Listowel.—25th June, 1915.
Banbridge.—9th Jan., 1910.	Lurgan.—1st Nov., 1909.
Bangor.—1st Jan., 1910.	Nass.—1st March, 1910.
Blackrock.—14th Dec., 1914.	Navan.—1st May, 1910.
Carrickfergus.—1st Oct., 1911.	New Ross.—1st July, 1910.
Clogher.—1st March, 1910.	Newtownards.—1st Jan., 1910.
Coleraine.—1st Jan., 1910.	Pembroke.—1st July, 1910.
Cookstown.—1st Dec., 1914.	Portadown.—1st Nov., 1909.
Dalkey.—1st Jan., 1911.	Portrush.—1st Jun., 1910.
Drogheda.—8th Aug., 1910.	Tralee.—1st Aug., 1914.
	Westport.—1st March, 1914.
	Wexford.—10th Oct., 1916.

Rural Districts and Date of Commencement.
Antrim.—1st Jan., 1915.
Ardee No. 1.—1st May, 1914.
Ardee No. 2.—1st Nov., 1909.
Armagh.—3rd July, 1911.
Athlone No. 1.—1st Oct., 1909.
Athy No. 1.—1st May, 1913.
Ballymena.—1st April, 1910.
Ballymore.—1st Jan., 1910.
Ballyshannon.—1st Jan., 1915.
Balrothery.—1st Jan., 1910.
Banbridge.—1st Jan., 1916.
Belfast.—1st Jan., 1910.
Belleek.—1st Jan., 1915.
Carrickmacross.—1st Oct., 1918.
Castlereagh.—1st Feb., 1910.
Celbridge No. 1.—1st Feb., 1918.
Celbridge No. 2.—1st Feb., 1910.
Clifden.—1st May, 1915.
Clogher.—1st Aug., 1915.
Cloone No. 1.—1st Jan., 1918.
Cookstown.—1st Jan., 1915.
Croom.—1st Nov., 1912.
Dublin, North.—27th Nov., 1909.
Dublin, South.—7th January, 1910.

Rural Districts and Date of Commencement.
Dungannon.—1st Jan., 1913.
Edenderry No. 2.—1st March, 1913.
Ennis.—1st Aug., 1913.
Enniscorthy.—1st April, 1917.
Glin.—13th July, 1915.
Kenmare.—1st March, 1910.
Kinlough.—1st May, 1915.
Lismavady.—1st Jan., 1915.
Limerick No. 1.—1st March, 1912.
Lismore.—1st July, 1913.
Lismasken.—10th Dec., 1914.
Londonderry No. 2.—1st Feb., 1915.
Manorhamilton.—1st Feb., 1915.
Mullingar.—1st Jan., 1910.
Nass No. 1.—1st Dec., 1912.
Navan.—26th April, 1910.
Newcastle.—7th Dec., 1912.
Newry No. 1.—15th Dec., 1909.
Newry No. 2.—1st Nov., 1909.
Newtownards.—1st Jan., 1910.
Rathdown No. 1.—15th Feb., 1913.
Rathkeale.—1st July, 1915.
Sligo.—9th Aug., 1913.
Trim.—30th Oct., 1909.

The misapprehensions with regard to the notification of Tuberculosis which were prevalent at the time when statutory facilities were first afforded are gradually disappearing and some local bodies have passed resolutions in favour of the general introduction of the system. We continue to urge on Sanitary Authorities who have not adopted Part I. of the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908, the advantages to the community to be derived from the notification of Tuberculosis, and to explain the means by which the information obtained might be utilised in connection with the administration of County schemes for the treatment of Tuberculosis for the benefit of patients and for the early diagnosis of the disease among contacts.

It would appear that notification is not infrequently delayed until the later stages of the disease. In the interests alike of patients and of the general community, it is important that notification should take place before the disease has reached an advanced stage, and it is to be hoped that Sanitary Authorities will bear this consideration in mind in connection with their administration of Part I. of the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908.

We append a summary of notifications received in the County Borough of Dublin, classified according to age and sex:—

Dublin County Borough.

Notifications of Tuberculosis for Year ended 31st March, 1917.

Age Periods	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under 5 years	4	6	10
5 years and under 10	5	19	24
10 15	16	25	41
15 25	69	109	178
25 35	66	100	166
35 45	74	58	132
45 years and upwards	52	26	78
TOTAL	286	343	629

The total number of notifications recorded for the previous year in the Dublin County Borough was 1,007.

*Treatment of Tuberculosis.**1. Appointment and Work of Tuberculosis Officers.*

In twenty-seven counties and three County Boroughs appointments of Tuberculosis Officers have been made. These officers, in addition to their ordinary duties, have been engaged in organising a system of administration, assisting in the selection and arrangement of Central Tuberculosis Dispensaries, and in discharging the functions of Medical Advisers to the County Insurance Committees for the purposes of Sanatorium Benefit. Permanent Central Dispensaries have been provided and are in operation in Dublin and Waterford County Boroughs, and in the Counties of Armagh, Clare, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, King's County, Louth, Sligo, and Tipperary (North Riding), whilst similar establishments are in course of completion for Belfast County Borough and the Counties of Kilkenny, Leitrim, Monaghan, Queen's County, and Tyrone. Elsewhere arrangements of a provisional character have been made. In many counties the premises of the Medical Charities Dispensaries have by arrangement with the Boards of Guardians and subject to the convenience of the Dispensary Medical Officers, been placed at the disposal of the Tuberculosis Officer as branch depots for the examination and treatment of tuberculous patients. In this way an organisation covering the area of each County is being established. At the Dispensaries of the Corporations of Belfast and Dublin large numbers of patients have attended for advice and treatment. It is evident from the reports which have reached us that the Tuberculosis Officers are performing very useful work, and have come in touch with many cases of Tuberculosis. Their services will, no doubt, be still more generally availed of when the public become more familiar with the operation of the Dispensary system. Much depends on the activity and resource of the individual Tuberculosis Officer.

Assistant Tuberculosis Officers have been appointed in the County Boroughs of Dublin and Belfast and in County Down.

2. Approval of Institutions.

Under the provisions of Section 16 (1) (a) of the National Insurance Act, 1911, our approval is required to sanatoria and other institutions with which the Insurance Committees make arrangements for the reception of insured persons suffering from tuberculosis.

Intimation of each approval is furnished to the Insurance Commissioners.

The following additions have been made to the list of approved institutions :—

Armagh County Sanatorium, Drumarg, Armagh.—Early and such other cases of tuberculosis as are recommended for isolation purposes.

County Infirmary, Cavan.—Surgical cases of tuberculosis.

Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin.—Surgical cases of tuberculosis.

In expressing approval of institutions, we have stipulated that proper records of cases shall be kept, that the institutions shall be open to our inspection at any time, and that we reserve the right to withdraw our approval at any time, should circumstances arise which would warrant such a course.

3. Approval of Domiciliary Treatment.

Under Section 16 (1) (b) of the National Insurance Act, 1911, our approval is required to the manner in which the treatment of tuberculous insured persons (otherwise than in sanatoria and other institutions) is undertaken by persons and local authorities. Under the arrangements explained in previous reports, we deal with individual cases according to their merits and circumstances in those Counties in which no Tuberculosis Officer has been appointed, and we have accordingly approved the manner of treatment proposed to be undertaken in connection with cases submitted by the Insurance Committees of Londonderry, Meath and Roscommon Counties, and Limerick County Borough. Where Tuberculosis Officers have taken up duty it devolves on them, under the general conditions of approval drawn up by us, to supervise the suitability of the home surroundings in which treatment is undertaken as well as the course of treatment carried out by a medical practitioner.

4. Distribution of the Sanatorium Grant.

Under the provisions of Section 16 (1) (b) of the Finance Act, 1911, and Section 64 of the National Insurance Act, 1911, a sum of £1,500,000 was made available for the purposes of the provision of or making grants in aid to Sanatoria and other institutions for the treatment of Tuberculosis, and was divisible among the constituent countries of the United Kingdom on the basis of population. The share accruing to Ireland was certified to be £145,623, and its distribution devolves upon us subject to the consent of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury. As previously explained, the bulk of the Grant has been allocated to county areas on the basis of population.

Instalments from the Sanatorium Grant have been issued in the following cases :—

Co. Clare.—Restoration and enlargement of Clare County Sanatorium, Ballyalla, Ennis.

Co. Galway.—Central Tuberculosis Dispensary, Galway.

Co. Leitrim.—Central Tuberculosis Dispensary, Carrick-on Shannon.

Co. Louth.—Central Tuberculosis Dispensary, Dundalk.

Queen's County.—Central Tuberculosis Dispensary, Maryborough.

Co. Tyrone.—Central Tuberculosis Dispensary and Sanatorium at Dungannon.

Women's National Health Association.—Peamount Sanatorium, County Dublin.

Treasury approval has also been obtained to a contribution from the Grant to the Corporation of Belfast in respect of the establishment of a Central Tuberculosis Institute at Durham Street, Belfast.

The total issues out of the Irish portion of the Sanatorium Grant to the 31st March, 1917, amounted to £54,206 19s. 2d. The suspension by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury of further capital expenditure from the Sanatorium Grant in respect of the building of new Sanatoria, and, save in special circumstances, of Dispensaries, still remains in force. This decision, which was based on financial grounds and the necessity of restricting the employment of labour and materials in competition with the urgent and overwhelming demands of the present war upon all the resources of the country, is not, of course, applicable to undertakings which formed the subject of existing contracts.

5. Exchequer Grant in Aid of the Treatment of Tuberculosis.

A Grant in aid of the net cost of the treatment of Tuberculosis has been included by Parliament in the Civil Service Estimates, and is applicable to—

- (1) Half the net expenditure, after deducting receipts from Insurance Committees or other sources, incurred by a County or County Borough Council, under a scheme of treatment approved by us, and

- (2) Half the excess expenditure of an Insurance Committee, over and above the amount of the Committee's fund available for Sanatorium Benefit, incurred in affording Sanatorium Benefit to insured persons and their dependants, and sanctioned by the County or County Borough Council and the Treasury.

The distribution of the Grant has been entrusted to us on behalf of the Treasury, and is subject to the conditions detailed in our Circular Letter of the 5th December, 1913.

The total recoupments made during the year to the 31st March, 1917, amounted to £36,721 6s. 4d., and the particulars of the disbursements are shown below :—

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Armagh	... 1,324 12 11	Mayo	... 627 15 2
Carlow	... 490 5 1	Meath	... 189 6 4
Cavan	... 709 15 11	Monaghan	... 601 5 7
Clare	... 767 0 5	Queen's County	... 440 1 10
Donegal	... 218 5 7	Roscommon	... 49 15 2
Down	... 660 14 1	Sligo	... 585 4 11
Dublin	... 612 15 7	Tipperary (N. Riding)	573 8 3
Downpatrick	... 687 18 10	Tipperary (S. Riding)	515 17 10
Galway	... 978 18 4	Tyrone	... 1,086 15 10
Kerry	... 1,465 14 8	Waterford	... 441 5 7
Kildare	... 877 16 11	Westmeath	... 277 5 5
Kilkenny	... 890 18 7	Wexford	... 480 4 10
King's County	... 980 5 4	Belfast Co. Borough	10,420 18 8
Leitrim	... 706 0 10	Dublin Co. Borough	8,861 16 9
Limerick	... 435 8 0	Waterford Co. Borough	262 7 4
Louth	... 534 6 2	Cork Joint Hospital Board	52 10 0

6. *Progress of County Schemes.*

From the foregoing particulars it will be observed that a marked advance has been made in the development of County Schemes for the treatment of Tuberculosis. Despite the unfavourable conditions resulting from the war, it has been found possible to open several important institutions in connection with the campaign against Tuberculosis, whilst others are approaching completion. In three-fourths of the Counties and County Boroughs of Ireland schemes are in operation for combating the disease, and we hope that the remaining County and County Borough Councils will see the advantage of formulating similar schemes, so that expert medical advice and treatment may be available for the benefit of persons suffering from Tuberculosis in every administrative area in Ireland. In various counties measures have been taken to place the arrangements on more systematic lines in order to secure, as far as possible, that every person in the county requiring treatment or attention under the scheme shall be dealt with. Branch Tuberculosis Dispensaries have been opened to meet the needs of districts remote from the Central Tuberculosis Dispensary, and, by

agreement with local voluntary associations, the part-time services of their Nurses have been utilised for the care and treatment of tuberculous cases. These Nurses work under the directions and supervision of the Tuberculosis Officer, and by this means he finds it possible to keep in closer touch with his patients throughout the whole county, and to link up the various units of the scheme with the Central Tuberculosis Dispensary.

A further important step towards the co-ordination of the measures for dealing with the prevention and cure of the disease is to be noted in the completion of Agreements between County Councils and County Insurance Committees for the treatment of insured and exempt persons recommended for Sanatorium Benefit.

We fully explained in our last Report the various advantages which would accrue from the adoption of the policy embodied in such agreements, the main object of which was to secure the unification of the Tuberculosis administration in each County. We pointed out that, under the agreements, the County Council would place the services of the Tuberculosis Officer at the disposal of the Insurance Committee as required for the administration of Sanatorium Benefit; that patients recommended by the Insurance Committee would participate in all the facilities of the County Dispensary system, including nursing attendance and the provision of shelters, and that a specified number of beds would be reserved in Sanatoria and other Institutions for patients selected by the Committee, and Domiciliary treatment would be provided for similar patients within a defined limit of yearly cost.

We are now pleased to record that over two-thirds of the County and Borough Authorities, who are carrying out schemes, have completed agreements on these general lines—viz.: the Counties of Armagh, Cavan, Clare, Donegal, Dublin, Fermanagh, Kerry, Kildare, King's County, Leitrim, Limerick, Louth, Monaghan, Queen's County, Sligo, Tipperary (South Riding), and Waterford, and the County Boroughs of Belfast, Dublin and Waterford.

In pursuance of such agreements, 238 institutional beds have already been allocated for the accommodation of insured and exempt patients.

While it is satisfactory to note that considerable progress has been made by the County and County Borough Councils with the arrangements for the detection and treatment of persons suffering from Tuberculosis in their areas, still the more important question regarding the prevention of the disease has not received the full attention which it deserves. The result will, therefore, fall short of what the ratepayers have a right to expect unless further efforts are made to bring every person suffering from Tuberculosis under the supervision of the Tuberculosis Officer.

We notice that in some counties certain sums are disbursed in fees to medical attendants and on incidental expenses for patients under domiciliary treatment, and it is worthy of careful consideration whether this expenditure could not be applied to better advantage. It must be borne in mind that the prevention of Tuberculosis should be the aim of a County scheme of treatment, and that if a reasonable measure of success in this direction is to be obtained, the large proportion of the cases of the disease should be brought under systematic supervision. It is also essential that means should be provided for the isolation of advanced cases, and more particularly for those living under conditions which render the taking of ordinary precautions against the spread of disease impossible. Such cases are a menace to those around them, and it is for this reason that suitable hospital accommodation is urgently required; but it must be attractive and within easy reach of the patients' homes, otherwise they will prefer to remain in their homes, however wretched these may be.

We trust that these two important factors will engage the earnest attention of the various authorities, with a view to making such arrangements as will result in a further substantial and progressive lessening of the death-rate from the disease.

During the past year the number of soldiers suffering from Tuberculosis that we have been called upon to deal with has been larger than at any similar period since the beginning of the War. There are several reasons to account for this, the principal being the very large increase in the numerical strength of the Army, and the effect which the strain incidental to military training and service in the field must undoubtedly have on persons not wholly free from tubercular disease. While it has been a source of gratification to the country at large that the splendid medical and scientific advances in the Army Medical Department have aided in reducing the incidence of the diseases formerly associated with war conditions, such as Enteric Fever, Typhus Fever, and Dysentery, it is regrettable to find that tuberculous conditions are so prevalent in civil life, as is evidenced by the fact that, in the vast majority of the cases arising among the military, the soldiers had been infected with the germs of the disease prior to enlistment. From this point of view it is only reasonable that the County Councils of the Counties in which the soldiers resided before joining the Army should bear a moiety of the expense of treatment, the Government bearing the other moiety; and it is satisfactory to note that, with very few exceptions, County Councils have willingly recognised their responsibility in this respect.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

Under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts of 1878 and 1886, and the Order thereunder, Local Authorities—i.e., the

District Councils of Urban and Rural Districts—are empowered to make Regulations for any or all of the following purposes :—

- (a) For the registration of all persons carrying on the trade of cowkeepers, dairymen, or purveyors of milk;
- (b) For the inspection of cattle in dairies, and for prescribing and regulating the lighting, ventilation, cleansing, drainage and water supply of dairies and cowsheds in the occupation of persons following the trade of cowkeepers or dairymen;
- (c) For securing the cleanliness of milkstores, of milkshops, and of milk vessels used for containing milk for sale by such persons;
- (d) For prescribing precautions to be taken for protecting milk against infection or contamination.

Our general regulations for the control of the milk supply are contained in the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops (Ireland) Order of 1908, which came into operation on the 1st May, 1908. We have strongly recommended District Councils, where the dairying industry is extensively carried on, to appoint Veterinary Surgeons as Chief Inspectors to superintend the work of the ordinary Inspector. The number of districts in which Veterinary Surgeons have, up to the present, been employed for the administration of the Order is 197, while in 102 districts other inspectors have been appointed. It will thus be seen that provision for the control of the sources of the public milk supply has been made in 299 out of a total of 311 sanitary districts.

From a return which we recently obtained from the clerks of local authorities, it appears that 51,781 persons are now registered as carrying on the trade of cowkeeper, dairyman, or purveyor of milk. No doubt this number is capable of being increased, but the supervision over dairy premises, even as at present exercised, cannot fail to be attended with beneficial results to public health. The information which has reached us goes to show that the Order is steadily effecting an improvement in the conditions under which the milk supply is produced, and that its valuable provisions towards that end are being every day better recognised.

Alleged Default of Sanitary Authorities.

Section 15 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1896, provides that, where complaint is made to us that a Sanitary Authority has made default in providing their district with a proper supply

of water, or with sufficient sewers, or in enforcing any provisions of the Public Health Acts which it is their duty to enforce, we may, if satisfied after due enquiry of the alleged default, make an Order limiting a time for the performance by the Sanitary Authority of their duty in the matter of the complaint. Such Order may be enforced by writ of *mandamus*, or we may appoint a person to perform such duty at the expense of the defaulting authority.

No Default Orders were made during the year under review.

Investment of Rural Sanitary Authorities with Powers of Urban Authorities under the Public Health Acts.

Under Section 1 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1896, we are enabled, on the application of the Sanitary Authority of any rural district, or of persons rated to the extent of at least one-tenth of the net rateable value of such district, or of any contributory place therein, to declare any provision of the Public Health (Ireland) Acts in force in urban districts to be in force in such rural district or contributory place, and to invest the Rural Authority concerned with all the powers, rights, duties, capacities, liabilities and obligations of an Urban Authority under those Acts.

No Orders were made by the Board under this Section during the year.

Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907.

Under the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907, we are empowered, upon the application of a local authority, to declare the provisions of Part II., III., IV., V., VI. and X., or any Section contained therein, to be in force in the district of such authority, or in the case of a rural district, in any contributory place. Applications have been received by us from some local authorities under this Act, and Orders have been made in the following cases :—

District, Date of Order, and Parts or Sections Applied.

Loughrea Rural District.—10th August, 1916.—Parts III., IV. and V.

Dundalk Urban District.—15th March, 1917.—Parts II., III., IV., V., VI., and X.

Kingsdown Urban District.—10th October, 1916.—Section 76 in Part VI.

Closing of Burial Grounds.

Under Sections 162 to 164 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, we are empowered to order that burials in any city or town, or within any other limits, or in any burial ground

or places of burial, shall he wholly discontinued, or shall be discontinued subject to any exception or qualification, where, upon representation made to us or otherwise, it shall appear, after due local inquiry, that an order is necessary for the protection of public health, or for the maintenance of public decency, or to prevent a violation of the respect due to the remains of deceased persons. Nine Orders were made during the year, closing, or postponing the date of closing, certain Burial Grounds.

We are also authorised by Section 168 to grant licences for interment in closed burial grounds; and, in pursuance of this authority, we issued forty-one such licences during the year ended the 31st March, 1917.

Venereal Diseases' Grant.

Following the issue of the Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases and the adoption of its general conclusions by the Government, the Board made application to the Treasury for the extension of the Venereal Diseases' Grant to Ireland, and the Treasury, in reply, agreed in principle to the provision of a Grant to enable the Board to recoup 75 per cent. of the cost of approved schemes of Irish local authorities for the free diagnosis and treatment of these diseases and for other preventive measures. The Board thereupon made further application to the Government for the extension to Ireland of Statutory powers already existing in England, and now necessary to enable County Councils in this country to take advantage of the grant and to organise schemes on the lines recommended by the Royal Commission. This proposed legislation has been approved by the Government, and the Board await the decision of Parliament thereon, as, in the event of enactment, it would be possible to empower all County and County Borough Councils to organise their schemes concurrently and, in suitable circumstances, make joint arrangements so as to obtain more efficient and economical facilities from the University and other laboratories, hospitals and specialists, to whom the work of diagnosis and treatment must, on account of its highly technical nature, be very largely entrusted.

The facts relating to these diseases are contained in the Report and Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases and their general conclusions, which have been adopted by the Government, indicate the administrative and legislative lines of action proposed to be taken.

As to prevalence, the Commission report—"The evidence we have received leads us to the conclusion that the number of persons who have been infected with syphilis, acquired or congenital, cannot fall below ten per cent. of the whole population in the large cities, and the percentage affected with gonorrhœa must greatly exceed this proportion." As to effects, they show that these diseases, often hereditary or innocently,

acquired, and often unknown to the sufferers or even their medical attendants, are responsible for a large loss of life, both ante and post natal, as well as for a large amount of suffering and inefficiency, and a consequent burden on the ratepayers and the community in the maintenance of mentally and physically unfit. Very recent advances in pathology and medicine, such as the discovery of the specific organism of syphilis in 1905 and the subsequent discovery of the test for its detection in the blood, have added considerably to scientific knowledge of the diseases, and have shown that their evils are far more widespread and more dangerous than hitherto recognised. The Commission also record "their strong opinion that the conditions now existing, and those which must follow on the conclusion of the war, render it imperative that action should be taken without delay"; while they add that "all experience shows that after a war an excessive incidence of disease is certain to occur, even in districts previously free." It will thus be seen that the question is of the utmost importance, and one calling for immediate attention.

Notification of Births Acts, 1907 and 1915.

We referred in our last annual Report to the powers given to Local Sanitary Authorities under the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915, to make such arrangements as might be sanctioned by us for attending to the health of expectant and nursing mothers, and of children under five years of age, with the view of diminishing as far as possible the present high rate of Infant Mortality.

This Act, which confers wide powers both on us and, with our approval, on the local sanitary authorities, will in practice enable these authorities to carry out any suitable scheme for the physical welfare of mothers and young children; and it is to be hoped that the powers which have thus freely been placed in the hands of the Urban and Rural Sanitary Authorities by Parliament will be availed of by them to the fullest extent, having due regard to the circumstances of their respective Districts.

These schemes may include :

The appointment of Health Visitors to advise expectant and nursing mothers in their own homes, whose districts should, as far as possible, coincide with the boundaries of Dispensary Relief Districts.

The formation of maternity centres or clinics, at which medical supervision may be provided for mothers and children and advice given to mothers.

The provision of facilities for confinements, including skilled attendance and hospital accommodation.

The establishment of nurseries, crèches and baby centres.

The provision of milk or other foods free, or at or under cost price, for expectant and nursing mothers and young children.

The constitution of classes in domestic hygiene, domestic economy, etc., for girls about to leave school or after school age. *

The organisation of instructional courses for Nurses and Health Visitors at Lying-in hospitals, children's hospitals, and other similar institutions.

In Urban Districts such of these measures as may be deemed suitable should be provided for by the Urban Councils; and, where voluntary organisations exist which deal with any portion of the work, it is desirable that their operations should as far as practicable be co-ordinated with the scheme of the local authority so as to avoid overlapping. In Rural Districts much simpler arrangements will, as a rule, be adequate, and the needs of some of these districts may probably be sufficiently met by the appointment at the outset of a Health Visitor to visit the mothers and infants in their homes.

A Grant in aid of such schemes in Urban Districts was assigned from Imperial Funds last year, and we issued a circular to all such authorities on the 8th of June, 1916, drawing their attention thereto, outlining the general character of the points to be considered in formulating schemes, and transmitting the Regulations in accordance with which recoupment in respect of approved schemes would be made out of the Grant. Recoupment was made up to one-half the approved net expenditure, which was strictly limited to certain classes clearly defined in our circular. In all 24 Urban Districts participated in the Grant.

The Grant having been continued for the coming year, and having been made applicable to rural areas, we supplied the Rural District Councils with similar information to that already conveyed to the Urban Authorities.

While such schemes should preferably be undertaken by the Local Authorities, it is open to any local voluntary society dealing with the care of mothers and children, if the Sanitary Authority for their area fail to move in the matter, to submit a scheme to us, which should be closely co-ordinated with the general public health administration of the district, and, if approved, would rank for recoupment out of the Grant on the terms indicated.

In view of the high price and scarcity of milk in certain parts of the country, a number of Urban District Councils have made provision for the supply of milk either free, or at or under cost price, for the use of expectant and nursing mothers and children under five years of age where the circumstances called for such assistance. A milk depot on these lines has been in operation in the Newry Urban District for nearly twelve months with excellent results.

Health of Troops.

Since the outbreak of the War we have been working in full co-operation with the Military Authorities as regards all questions in relation to water supply, sewerage and general sanitation which might affect the health of the troops stationed in any part of the country, and have kept them informed of the cases of infectious disease which have occurred in the neighbourhood of camps or military stations.

We have also had inspections made and reports furnished as to the condition of the premises of all Food Contractors for the Army and Navy.

Sale of Food and Drugs Acts.

The Local Authorities in this Country for the administration of the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts are the Councils of the Counties and of the County and Municipal Boroughs. Each Local Authority appoints a Public Analyst, subject to our approval, and also appoints, at their discretion, Food and Drugs Inspectors to take samples and submit them for analysis. The members of the Royal Irish Constabulary Force perform the duty, without extra remuneration, in the Counties and some of the Boroughs, but in the other Boroughs the Corporations have appointed officials of their own as Food and Drugs Inspectors.

We have no change to report in the staff of Public Analysts. The Quarterly Reports of the Analysts show that the range of articles from which the samples are selected for examination is a very full one, and includes all the principal items of food. The proportion of milk samples, too, is considerable, and we are pleased to observe that efforts are everywhere being made to safeguard the purity of this important article of diet.

IV.—PROVISIONAL ORDERS UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH (IRELAND) ACTS, 1878 TO 1907, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) ACTS, 1898 TO 1902, AND THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) ACTS, 1890 TO 1906.

Three Provisional Orders were made during the year under these Acts, one being under the Public Health Acts, one under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Acts and Sections 80 and 205 of the Public Health Act, 1878, and two under the Local Government Acts.

We also dealt with a Petition for a Provisional Order under the Housing Acts, which was refused.

V.—LABOURERS ACTS.

In our last Report we stated that proceedings under these Acts in regard to the promotion of new Improvement Schemes

had been suspended owing to the necessity of curtailing Capital expenditure during the War; and, of course, this position of affairs still continues.

The operations of Local Authorities have, therefore, been confined to the carrying out of Schemes previously authorised in the cases of those cottages for the erection of which contracts had been entered into, and those which we were satisfied were urgently required to replace condemned dwellings whose occupants could not otherwise be provided for.

The general result on the 31st March last, so far as authorised Improvement Schemes are concerned, is that since 1883, when the Acts first came into operation, 47,685 cottages have been provided, being an increase of 641 since the 31st March, 1916, and that 443 were in course of construction, being a diminution of 627 on the corresponding figure for the previous year.

The particulars by Provinces are as follows:—

Province	Number of Cottages		
	Provided.	In Progress.	
Ulster	...	8,985	71
Munster	...	19,023	166
Leinster	...	17,250	144
Connnaught	...	2,427	62
Total	...	47,685	443

The rents paid during the year amounted to £140,573 14s. Od., leaving a balance due of £9,252 11s. Od.

During the year we sanctioned the advance of loans from the Irish Land Commission in respect of two Rural Districts, amounting to £3,400, as compared with £7,686 in the preceding year. We also sanctioned the borrowing in the open market of £16,929 in respect of fifteen Rural Districts for the purpose of completing Improvement Schemes where the loans obtained from the Land Commission on our fixed basis of £170 per cottage proved insufficient. These sums, added to the amount of loans previously sanctioned, make a total authorised to be borrowed since the passing of the Labourers Act of 1883 of £9,057,459, of which £5,188,420 will be advanced by the Irish Land Commission out of the fund of £6,250,000 provided for the purposes of the Labourers Acts by Section 16 of the Act of 1906, as amended by the Acts of 1911 and 1914.

VI.—BORROWING BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

(a) *Treasury Restrictions on Borrowing.*

The restrictions imposed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury on capital issues by Local Authorities, as set forth in the circular letter of the 4th of May, 1915, which

was printed in our last Report, still remain in force. Strict adherence to the terms of the circular has consequently resulted in considerably reducing the total of the loans sanctioned during the year for Housing, Public Health, Poor Relief, and Local Government Acts purposes, as compared with the total of such loans sanctioned during the previous year.

(b) *Loans sanctioned for Schemes under the Housing Acts, and under the Public Health, etc., Acts.*

1. *Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Acts, 1890 to 1908.*

Under these enactments Urban Sanitary Authorities and the Commissioners of Towns which are not Urban Sanitary Districts are empowered to carry out schemes for the provision of housing accommodation for the working classes.

Since the passing of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908, local authorities have been enabled to borrow for longer periods than had previously been allowed.

The cases are detailed below in which loans have been sanctioned during the year for the purposes of Part I. and Part III. of the Act of 1890.

In accordance with Section 5 of the Act of 1908, we ascertained and certified the amounts in respect of which certain local authorities were liable under the Section, and the following table shows the cases in which payments from the Irish Housing Fund have been made during the year. In each case mentioned the annual housing charge, as defined in the Section, was met to the extent of 18 per cent.

LOCAL AUTHORITY.	Amount of Grant.
Arklow Urban District Council	£43 8 2
Armagh Urban District Council	5 9 6
Athlone Urban District Council	52 19 6
Athy Urban District Council	60 10 4
Ballina Urban District Council	30 16 2
Ballinasloe Urban District Council	70 8 7
Ballybay Town Commissioners	0 12 1
Ballymoney Urban District Council	24 17 1
Bandon Town Commissioners	44 6 7
Bantry Town Commissioners	12 1 7
Belfast Corporation	1,078 1 8
Birr Urban District Council	55 17 6
Blackrock Urban District Council	197 19 3
Bray Urban District Council	95 0 7
Callan Town Commissioners	30 5 10
Carlow Urban District Council	68 7 4
Carrickmacross Urban District Council	49 12 7
Cashel Urban District Council	8 7 2
Castlebar Urban District Council	36 0 4

LOCAL AUTHORITY.		Amounts ..	
		Grant.	
Cavan Urban District Council ...	...	£32	9 10
Clonakilty Urban District Council	...	14	11 5
Clonmel Corporation	...	81	18 1
Coleraine Urban District Council	...	41	14 2
Cookstown Urban District Council	...	20	16 3
Cootehill Urban District Council	...	12	9 7
Dalkey Urban District Council...	...	52	14 10
Drogheda Corporation	...	108	15 6
Dublin Corporation	...	352	6 6
Dundalk Urban District Council	...	131	5 1
Dungannon Urban District Council	...	43	10 7
Dungarvan Urban District Council	...	35	14 2
Ennis Urban District Council ...	...	140	9 3
Enniscorthy Urban District Council	...	47	15 7
Fermoy Urban District Council	...	108	7 11
Fethard Town Commissioners ...	...	9	14 7
Galway Urban District Council...	...	218	5 1
Granard Urban District Council	...	34	0 1
Kells Urban District Council ...	...	14	4 2
Kilkenny Corporation	...	97	14 7
Killarney Urban District Council	...	29	15 0
Killiney and Ballybrack Urban District Council	...	38	10 2
Kingstown Urban District Council	...	198	7 4
Letterkenny Urban District Council	...	54	15 11
Limerick Corporation	...	178	16 11
Longford Urban District Council	...	62	14 3
Lurgan Urban District Council...	...	94	4 10
Maryborough Town Commissioners	...	51	19 3
Midleton Urban District Council	...	26	15 9
Monaghan Urban District Council	...	29	0 8
Mountmellick Town Commissioners	...	14	9 4
Mullingar Town Commissioners	...	31	13 10
Naas Urban District Council ...	...	43	6 6
Navan Urban District Council ...	...	93	2 5
Nenagh Urban District Council	...	39	9 10
Newbridge Town Commissioners	...	1	13 11
Newcastle (Co. Limerick) Town Commissioners	...	30	1 8
New Ross Urban District Council	...	81	7 8
Newry Urban District Council ...	...	129	11 8
Omagh Urban District Council...	...	15	10 8
Pembroke Urban District Council	...	611	15 6
Portrush Urban District Council	...	81	18 11
Queenstown Urban District Council	...	139	14 6
Roscommon Town Commissioners	...	22	9 8
Skibbereen Urban District Council	...	26	11 0
Thurles Urban District Council	...	22	13 10
Tipperary Urban District Council	...	95	1 0
Tralee Urban District Council ...	...	85	19 9
Trim Urban District Council ...	...	29	13 0

LOCAL AUTHORITY.		Amount of Grant.
Tuam Town Commissioners	...	33 8 10
Tullamore Urban District Council	...	59 19 1
Waterford Corporation	...	158 1 4
Westport Urban District Council	...	20 1 11
Wexford Corporation	...	78 9 8
Youghal Urban District Council	...	18 13 8

Part I.

During the year we sanctioned a loan of £16,367 to the Corporation of Belfast for the purpose of completing the Scheme authorised by the Belfast Improvement Order, 1910, under this Part of the Act of 1890.

Part III.

We also sanctioned, during the year, loans to the Councils of Urban Districts and to Commissioners of Towns under Municipal Government, as follows:—Arklow, £1,000; Balbriggan Town Commissioners, £400; Carlow, £1,600; and Kells, £180. The amount of these loans, added to £1,548,109, mentioned in our last Report, makes a total of £1,551,289, sanctioned for the purposes of this part of the Act. Of this total, £777,077 has been sanctioned since the passing of the Act of 1908.

2. *The Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899.*

Advances have been made during the year by the Corporation of Dublin, by means of former loans sanctioned by us, to the extent of £661, to enable persons to purchase the ownership of their houses under the provisions of this Act.

3. *Public Health (Ireland) Acts, 1878 to 1907, etc.*

Schemes for Sewerage, Water Supply and other local improvements are carried out by Sanitary Authorities in Urban, Rural and United Districts (Urban and Rural), chiefly by means of loans which we sanction in pursuance of Sections 237 and 247 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, and of local enactments. The loans sanctioned during the year for these purposes amounted to £68,397.

Section 237 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, applies to borrowing under the headings 1 and 2, as well as to that under this head; and the loans under these three heads amounted to £87,944, which, added to similar loans previously sanctioned, gives a total of £11,586,120.

4. *Poor Relief (Ireland) Acts and the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, Section 61.*

During the year we sanctioned loans amounting to £362 for Workhouse buildings and improvements on the application of the Boards of Guardians of the Unions concerned.

5. Local Government (Application of Enactments) Order, 1898,
Article 22 of the Schedule thereto.

Loans amounting to £20,685 under the provisions of this Article have been sanctioned for the purpose of enabling County Councils and the Joint Committees of Lunatic Asylum Districts to carry out works for county improvements, roads, etc., and for the erection of buildings and other works at Asylums.

6. Rates of Interest on Local Loans.

By Minute dated the 26th of March, 1917, the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury directed that the rates of interest chargeable on loans granted out of the Local Loans Fund should be as follows :—

		Rate of Interest.
I.	Loans to Local Authorities for any purposes of the Housing Acts and the Small Hold- ings Acts—	
	Any period 	$5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
II.	Other loans secured on Local Rates—	
	Not exceeding 30 years 	$5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
	Not exceeding 50 years 	$5\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.
III.	Loans not secured on Local Rates—	
	(a) Loans under the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act, 1861 :	
	(i) With collateral security of property. Not exceeding 30 years 	$5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
	Not exceeding 50 years 	$5\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.
	(ii) Without collateral security. Not exceeding 30 years 	6 per cent.
	Not exceeding 50 years 	$6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
	(b) Loans under the Housing Acts—	
	(i) To companies and private persons limiting their profits as provided by Treasury Minute of 14th November, 1890. Not exceeding 30 years 	$5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
	Not exceeding 40 years 	$5\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.
	(ii) To companies and private persons not so limiting their profits. Not exceeding 30 years 	6 per cent.
	Not exceeding 40 years 	$6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

VII.—PAYMENTS FROM THE LOCAL TAXATION (IRELAND) ACCOUNT
 IN AID OF LOCAL RATES.

1. Grants under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898.
- (a.) In respect of Guardians' Medical and Educational expen-
 diture and of Sanitary Salaries paid in Rural and Urban Dis-
 tricts.

The following statements show the amounts paid under Sec-
 tion 58 (2) (a) (b) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898,

as amended by the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1902, to county councils, on behalf of boards of guardians and rural district councils, and to urban district councils and the boards of management of Glin and Trim district schools during the year ended the 31st of March, 1917, and the preceding year.

Owing to the insufficiency of the amount paid under Section 58 to the Account during the year under review to meet the payments thereout in the same period Your Excellency deemed it necessary, in pursuance of Sub-section (5) of the Section, to make an Order directing proportionate abatements of the sums so payable having regard to the said insufficiency. These abatements amounted to £13,895 16s. 1d.

Year ended 31st March, 1917.	Amount claimed.	Amount payable.	Amount paid.
Medical Purposes	£ s. d. 75,687 2 6	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Educational Purposes	{ Salaries, &c. Medicines	16,791 7 0 7,633 12 10	
For Salaries under the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878—	103,112 2 4	87,622 16 9	76,128 11 8
Rural District Councils ..	11,404 5 4	10,530 1 5	9,148 15 0
Urban " "	11,521 10 2	7,777 8 1	6,757 3 6
Total	123,037 17 10	105,930 6 3	92,034 10 2

Year ended 31st March, 1916.	Amount claimed.	Amount payable.	Amount paid.
Medical Purposes	£ s. d. 74,815 17 9	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Educational Purposes	{ Salaries, &c. Medicines	14,951 2 1 7,783 14 0	
For Salaries under the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878—	97,555 13 3	87,324 12 11	75,761 8 3
Rural District Councils ..	11,431 1 6	10,558 2 1	9,160 0 0
Urban " "	11,617 13 8	7,778 18 6	6,748 17 4
Total	120,604 8 5	105,661 13 6	91,670 6 4

(b.) Agricultural Grant.

Under Section 48 (1) (2) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, an annual sum of £727,655, known as the Agricultural Grant, is paid from the Local Taxation (Ireland) Account in aid of local rates, of which the County Councils receive

£727,337 6s. 6d., the balance, £317 13s. 6d., being paid to the Council of the County Borough of Dublin, pursuant to Section 50 (1) (2) of that enactment, in consequence of the extension of the area of the borough by the Act 63 and 64 Vict., ch. cclxiv. Of the total amount, a sum of £316,730 10s. is allocated towards Poor Law purposes, "Union charges," £271,824 10s. towards the expenditure of Rural District Councils, "District charges," and £139,100 towards county expenditure in general, "County at large charges."

2. *Grant under the Probate Duties (Scotland and Ireland) Act, 1888 (the Estate or Death Duty Grant).*

Under Section 19 of the Finance Act, 1894 (57 and 58 Vic., chap. 30), the Grant provided by the above enactment which was formerly payable out of probate duties is now payable out of the estate duty derived from personal property, and is known as the Death Duty Grant.

It forms the first item of the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund established under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1891, to meet deficiencies in the land purchase account in respect of dividends on land stock and sinking fund payments, and the sums required for such purposes, in the case of each county, are withdrawn from the Fund under certificates of the Land Commission. By the Irish Land Act, 1903, the Agricultural Grant is added to and made applicable to the purposes of the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund next after the Death Duty Grant, and charges on the Fund resulting from operations under the Act of 1903, are likewise, in the case of each county, withdrawn under certificates of the Commissioners of National Debt; these certificates, and those above-mentioned, also setting forth repayments made to the Fund in respect of sums previously withdrawn. Under the Irish Land Act, 1909, however, local bodies are relieved of all liability in connection with the issue of stock for the purpose of land purchase, but they continue to be liable for purchasers' annuities in arrear, and for sums drawn from the Guarantee Fund under Section 29 of the Act of 1903.

For the purpose of adjusting these withdrawals and repayments in the case of each county, among the public bodies in the county who are entitled to share in the Death Duty Grant, viz., Boards of Guardians and Road Authorities, we are furnished with copies of the certificates referred to on the occasion of the distribution of the second instalment of the Grant, which is made in the month of March each year. On the recent occasion it appeared from the certificates that £164,613 1s. 10d. had been withdrawn from all the counties, and £151,789 8s. 6d. repaid; and, as the repayments in the case of five counties exceeded the withdrawals by £742 10s. 6d., the local bodies in these counties received their proportionate part of that amount additional to their share in the instalment, while £13,566 8s. 10d. was deducted from the shares of the local bodies in the remaining twenty-eight counties.

The total amounts paid during the year ended the 31st of March last were as follows :—

Boards of Guardians ...	... £128,112	8	0½
Road Authorities ...	... 129,370	8	8½
			£257,482
		16	9

VIII.—AUDIT.

(a.) *Accounts Audited.*

The following statement shows the number of Public Bodies whose accounts are audited by our Auditors, from which it may be seen that in the course of a year 1,419 accounts are required to be audited :—

Half-yearly Audits.

- 33 County Councils.
 - 213 Rural District Councils.
 - 158 Boards of Guardians.
 - 23 Committees of Management of District Lunatic Asylums.
 - 20 Drainage Boards or Committees.
 - 2 Committees of Management of District Schools.
 - 1 Joint Committee of Urban and Rural District Councils for the management of a cemetery and of sewerage and water supply.
 - 9 County Committees of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.
 - 24 County Joint Committees of Technical Instruction.
 - 24 County Committees of Agriculture.
 - 6 Hospital or Infirmary Boards.
 - 6 Burial Boards or Cemetery Committees.
 - 2 Joint Committees of County Councils for the construction of bridges.
 - 19 Tuberculosis Committees.
-
- 540
-

Yearly Audits.

- 6 County Borough Councils.
- 5 Non-County Borough Councils.
- 88 Urban District Councils.
- 27 Governing Bodies of Towns other than Urban Districts
- 137 Educational Endowment Accounts under the Endowment Schemes.
- 1 The Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests
- 3 Committees of Gasworks.
- 2 Waterworks Authorities.
- 4 Harbour Boards.
- 7 Port Sanitary Authorities.
- 6 Burial Boards or Cemetery Committees.
- 2 Drainage Boards.

- 9 Hospital or Infirmary Boards.
 1 Board for cleansing of foreshore.
 6 County Borough Committees of Technical Instruction.
 31 Urban District Committees of Technical Instruction.
 2 Joint Urban and Rural Committees of Technical Instruction.
 2 Tuberculosis Committees.
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(b.) *Surcharges, Disallowances, etc.*

During the year we decided appeals against 296 charges, disallowances, and surcharges.

Other surcharges were made in regard to which there were no appeals against the Auditors' decisions; in some cases the question of appeal did not arise, the various items of expenditure, to which exception was taken, having been lodged before the completion of audit, thus obviating the necessity of formally disallowing them.

IX.—EXAMINATION OF PARLIAMENTARY BILLS.

The Cork Improvement Bill was the only Irish local or personal Bill introduced into Parliament during the Session 1917. It was promoted jointly by the Corporation of the County Borough of Cork and the Cork Harbour Commissioners, and its promotion, so far as the expenses thereof might become a charge upon the rates under the control of the Corporation, received the approval of the Board—in respect of matters within their jurisdiction—under the Borough Funds (Ireland) Act, 1888. Following the usual course, the Bill was examined by us from the point of view of the general principles of local government, and a report dated 6th March, 1917, was presented to Parliament thereon. A Supplemental Memorandum was also issued on 10th May, after the Bill had been reported to the House of Commons. The Bill sought, amongst other things, for power to sell, for the purposes of a factory, a valuable City site belonging to the Corporation, and it was contemplated that both public and private rights would be affected by the sale. The proposals put forward for the application of the purchase money arising from the sale received the special attention of the Board in their report. In view of the importance of those proposals as possible precedents in Irish local legislation, the Legal Assistant of the Board was directed to attend and represent us before the Committees which dealt with the Bill, both in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords, for the purpose of affording such information in our possession as those Committees might require. The Bill was not opposed upon petition, and received the Royal Assent* subsequently to the year with which this Annual Report deals.

*10th July, 1917.

X.—DEPUTATIONS RECEIVED.

During the year under review we received deputations from the undermentioned local bodies, associations, etc., on subjects of public interest.

Date.	Local Body, etc.	Subject.
1916.		
7th June ..	Royal College of Physicians	Proposed Irish Midwives Bill.
26th July ..	Corporation of Dublin : Tuberculosis Committee.	(a) Increased prices of goods ; (b) Withdrawal of Insurance Benefits from patients ; (c) Salary of Medical Superintendent ; (d) Provision for interment of bodies ; (e) Status of existing Officers ; (f) Wages of labourers.
1st August ..	Corporation of Dublin : Public Health Committee.	Notification of Births Act.
8th August ..	Bray Urban District Council : Local Relief Committee.	Coal Supply during the Winter of 1916-17.
10th August	Tralee Board of Guardians	Dismissal of Porter and Night Nurse.
6th September	Corporation of Dublin : Public Health Committee.	Inspection of Meat Supply.
12th September	Kingstown Urban District Council ..	Increase of Salaries to Officials.
25th September	Irish Medical Association	Proposed Irish Midwives Bill.
1917.		
2nd January	Dublin Tenants Association	Proposed Loan from America for Housing Schemes.
16th January	Limerick County Borough : Gas Company	Financial Position of Company.
5th February	Cork Rural District Council	Supply of Seed to labourers and small occupiers.
7th February	Trim Rural District Council	Seed Supply.
9th February	Westmeath County Council	(a) Borrowing and Investment in 5 per cent War Loan ; (b) Tillage Schemes.
12th February	Corporation of Cork	Land Allotment Schemes.
28th February	Irish Women's Reform League ..	Provision of meals for School Children.

XI.—DEPARTMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

We regret to have to report to Your Excellency that during the year our Medical Commissioner, Sir Thomas J. Stafford, Baronet, C.B., F.R.C.S.I., was obliged to resign owing to indifferent health, and we desire to place on record our sense of the valuable services rendered to the State and to the Department by Sir Thomas Stafford during the period he was connected with this Office both in the capacity of Medical Inspector and Medical Commissioner.

His Majesty was pleased to appoint Edward Coey Bigger, Esq., M.D., M.S., D.S.M., one of our Medical Inspectors, to succeed Sir Thomas Stafford. As stated in our last report, Dr. Bigger had been discharging the duties of Medical Commissioner for some time during Sir Thomas Stafford's absence on sick leave.

We have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient Servants,

H. E. DUKE, *President.*

H. A. ROBINSON, *Vice-President.*

W. P. BYRNE,
EDMUND BOURKE,
E. COEY BIGGER, }
} Commissioners.

